BR 45 .B74 v.5

British Reformers

Presented to the Theo. Seminary
at Princeton. N.J.
By James Lenox Esq.

HOOPER.

Brit. Ref.

WRITINGS

OF

DR. JOHN HOOPER,

Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester. Martyr, 1555.

Pol. 5°

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

The Religious Tract Society,

AND SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER-ROW;

ALSO BY J. NISBET, 21, BERNERS-STREET;

AND BY OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

LONDON:
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES,
Stamford-street.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CONTENTS.

Page

A Brief account of Dr. John Hooper 1

A DECLARATION OF CHRIST AND HIS OFFICE.

Chap. I. Introduction 17
II. What Christ is 18
III. Of the Priesthood of Christ 20
IV. Of the authority of the Word of God 25
V. Of the intercession of Christ..... 32
VI. The third Office of Christ concerning his Priesthood is to offer sacrifice unto God, and by the same to purge the world from sin 47
VII. Of Justification 43
VIII. Of the Lord's supper 51
IX. Of Christ's Office of sanctifying those that believe in him 62
X. By this verity and truth, that "the gospel teaches we are only to be sanctified in the blood of Christ," is confuted the blasphemous pride of the bishop of Rome 63
XI. Of Christ as a King 68
XII. Of what man is..... 75
XIII. The office (or duty) of a justified man 80

AN OVERSIGHT AND DELIBERATION UPON THE HOLY PROPHET JONAH.

The Epistle addressed to king Edward VI. and his privy council 85
The first Sermon upon Jonah, made 19th March, 1550, before the king and his honourable council 93
The second Sermon upon Jonah 105
The third Sermon upon Jonah 111
The fourth Sermon upon Jonah 130
The fifth Sermon upon Jonah 146
The sixth Sermon upon Jonah..... 165
The seventh Sermon upon Jonah..... 181

A GODLY CONFESSION AND PROTESTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

Dedication 195
The confession and protestation of John Hooper's faith 199

Page
Bishop Hooper's articles and monitory letter to his clergy 220
A Homily to be read in the time of pestilence 223

COMFORTABLE EXPOSITIONS UPON THE TWENTY-THIRD, SIXTY-SECOND, SEVENTY-THIRD, SEVENTY-SEVENTH PSALMS.

An exposition of the twenty-third psalm 241
An exposition of the sixty-second psalm 290
An exposition of the seventy-third psalm..... 329
An exposition of the seventy-seventh psalm 354

EXTRACTS FROM A BRIEF AND CLEAR CONFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH 417

LETTERS.

Letter I. An exhortation to patience, sent to his wife 427
II. To certain godly persons, professors and lovers of the truth, as to the change of religion..... 437
III. To W. P. 440
IV. To Farrar, Taylor, Bradford, and Philpot 441
V. To certain godly persons, exhorting them to stick to the truth 443
VI. To Master John Hall. 445
VII. To his relievers and helpers in London 445
VIII. To the christian congregation 448
IX. To the faithful and lively members of Christ in London .. 454
X. An answer to a friend 456
XI. To Mrs. Ann Warcop 459
XII. To a godly widow 461
XIII. To one fallen from the truth 462
XIV. To Mrs. Wilkinson 464
XV. To a merchant of London 465
XVI. From Bullinger to Hooper 466
XVII. To Bullinger, written out of prison 470
XVIII. To John Hall and his wife 472
XIX. Respecting a godly company taken while at prayer, and carried to prison 473
XX. To the prisoners in the counters 474
XXI. To certain of his friends 476
XXII. Concerning vain and false reports 478
XXIII. Extract of a letter to Bullinger, giving an account of his conversion 480

A

BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF

DR. JOHN HOOPER,

Bishop of Gloucester, and Martyr, 1555.

John Hooper was born in Somersetshire, A. D. 1495, and entered at Merton college, Oxford, in 1514. It is thought that he afterwards became a Cistercian monk, but disliking the monastic life, he returned to Oxford, where, by the study of the scriptures, and the perusal of the writings of some of the continental reformers, he was induced to forsake the doctrines of popery. In a letter written by him to Bullinger, an extract from which has been preserved by Hottinger, he states, that some works of Zuinglius, and Bullinger's commentaries on the epistles of St. Paul, were principally instrumental to his conversion; these he studied day and night.

In the year 1539, when the act of the six articles was enforced, Hooper withdrew to the continent, and at Zurich was kindly received by Bullinger. On the accession of king Edward VI., Hooper, who had married while abroad, returned to England with a desire to assist in the good work then going forward. He had a presentiment of the times which followed; for on taking leave of Bullinger, when that reformer desired him to write to his friends in Switzerland, and not to forget them when raised to wealth and honours, Hooper assured him of his affectionate remembrance, adding, "I will write to you how it goeth with me. But the last news of all I shall not be able to write; for there (said he, taking Master Bullinger by the hand) where I shall take most pains, there shall you hear of my being burned to ashes; and that shall be the last news, which I shall not be able to write unto you, but you shall hear it of me."

He returned to England in 1548, and preached for some time in London, often twice, and never less than once a day. Fox says, "In his sermons, according to his accustomed manner, he corrected sin, and sharply inveighed against the iniquity of the world, and the corrupt abuses of the church. The people in great flocks and companies came daily to hear him, insomuch that oftentimes when he was preaching, the church would be so full that none could enter further than the doors. In his doctrine he was earnest, in tongue eloquent, in the scriptures perfect, in pains indefatigable."

In May, 1550, he was nominated to the bishopric of Gloucester, but was not consecrated till the following year. This delay was occasioned by some differences relative to the habits and oaths then used in the consecration of bishops.* During his residence on the continent, Hooper had adopted stricter views on these subjects than his brethren who remained at home, and he objected to these things as tending to superstition. Into the particulars of these differences it is unnecessary for us to enter; it is sufficient to state, that although Ridley and Cranmer were at variance with Hooper on these points, when the day of trouble came, we find them united as brethren in Christ. In justice to Ridley and Cranmer, it should also be stated, that the laws then in force left them no choice as to the course they should follow. The letter written by Ridley to Hooper when they were both imprisoned for the truth, shows that these things were then forgotten.

The diocese of Worcester was afterwards united to that of Gloucester, and Hooper conducted himself in his charge in the most exemplary manner. Fox says, "He employed his time with such diligence, as to be a spectacle (or pattern) to all bishops. So careful was he in his cure, that he left no pains untaken, nor ways unsought, how to train up the flock of Christ in the true word of salvation, continually labouring in the same. No father in his household, no gardener in his

* Hooper's objection to the oath was because it required him to swear by the saints; to this he objected, and the expression was struck out. With respect to the habits, a compromise was effected. To these oaths and habits he had objected in his sermons on Jonah, before the king; and we find that in the second service-book, set forth in 1551, an alteration for the better in these respects was effected. See a note upon the Sermons on Jonah.

garden, nor husbandman in his vineyard, was more or better occupied than he in his diocese amongst his flock, going about his towns and villages, in teaching and preaching to the people there. Although he bestowed the most part of his care upon the public flock and congregation of Christ, for which, also, he spent his blood; yet there lacked no provision in him to bring up his own children in learning and good manners; so that you could not discern whether he deserved more praise for his fatherly usage at home, or for his bishoplike doings abroad. For every where he kept one religion in one uniform doctrine and integrity; so that if you entered into the bishop's palace you would suppose you had entered some church or temple. In every corner there was some savour of virtue, good example, honest conversation, and reading of holy scriptures. There was not to be seen in his house any courtly roystering* or idleness, no pomp at all, no dishonest word, no swearing could there be heard. As for the revenues of his bishoprics, he pursed nothing, but bestowed it in hospitality. Twice I was at his house in Worcester, where in his common hall I saw a table spread with good store of meat, and set full of beggars and poor folk; and I asking the servants what this meant, they told me, that every day their lord and master's custom was to have to dinner a certain number of the poor folk of the city by course, who were served with wholesome meats; and when they were served, after having been examined by him or his deputies in the Lord's prayer, the articles of their faith, and ten commandments, he himself sat down to dinner, and not before."

On the accession of queen Mary, bishop Hooper was one of the first who were called before the council on account of their religion, being summoned to appear on the 22nd of August, 1553. Bonner and Gardiner were especially violent against him. As popery was not then restored by law, he was detained on a false plea of his being indebted to the queen. He has left the following account of the cruel treatment he experienced in the Fleet prison:—"The first of September, 1553, I was committed unto the Fleet from Richmond, to have the liberty of the prison: and within six days after I paid for my liberty five pounds sterling to the warden's fees; who, immediately upon the payment thereof, complained unto Stephen Gardiner, bishop

* Turbulent behaviour.

of Winchester, and so was I committed to close prison for one quarter of a year, in the tower-chamber of the Fleet, and used very extremely. Then, by the means of a good gentleman, I had liberty to come down to dinner and supper, yet not suffered to speak to any of my friends; but as soon as dinner and supper was done, to repair to my chamber again. Notwithstanding, whilst I came down thus to dinner and supper, the warden and his wife picked quarrels with me, and they complained untruly of me to their great friend, the bishop of Winchester. After one quarter of a year, and somewhat more, Babington, the warden, and his wife, fell out with me for the wicked mass, and thereupon the warden resorted to the bishop of Winchester, and obtained leave to put me into the wards, where I have continued a long time, having nothing appointed to me for my bed but a little pad of straw, and a rotten covering, with a tick and a few feathers therein, the chamber being vile and stinking, until, by God's means, good people sent me bedding to lie in. Of the one side of which prison is the sink and filth of the house; and on the other side, the town-ditch; so that the stench of the house hath infected me with sundry diseases. During which time I have been sick, and the doors, bars, hasps, and chains, being all closed, and made fast upon me, I have mourned, called, and cried for help. But the warden, when he hath known me many times ready to die, and when the poor men of the wards have called to help me, hath commanded the doors to be kept fast, and charged that none of his men should come at me, saying, 'Let him alone, it were a good riddance of him.' And amongst many other times, he did thus the 18th of October, 1553, as many can witness. I paid always like a baron to the said warden, as well in fees, as for my board, which was twenty shillings a week, besides my man's table, until I was wrongfully deprived of my bishopric, and since that I have paid him as the best gentleman doth in his house; yet hath he used me worse, and more vilely than the veriest slave that ever came to the hall commons. The said warden hath also imprisoned my man, William Downton, and stripped him of all his clothes to search for letters, and could find none, but only a little remembrance of good people's names, that gave me their alms to relieve me in prison; and to undo them also the said warden delivered the same bill unto the said Stephen Gardiner,

God's enemy and mine. I have suffered imprisonment almost eighteen months, my good living, friends, and comforts taken from me; the queen owing me, by just account, eighty pounds or more. She hath put me in prison, and gives nothing to find me, neither is there suffered any to come to me, whereby I might have relief. I am with a wicked man and woman, so that I see no remedy, saving God's help, but that I shall be cast away in prison* before I come to judgment. But I commit my just cause to God, whose will be done, whether it be by life or death."

Fox has given the particulars of bishop Hooper's examinations before Gardiner and other popish bishops, in January, 1555. He was condemned on three separate grounds :—first, for maintaining the lawfulness of the marriage of the clergy; secondly, for defending the scriptural doctrine respecting divorce (Matt. xix.); thirdly, for denying the carnal presence of Christ in the sacrament, and saying that the mass was an idol. After his condemnation he was taken by night to Newgate, and degraded by bishop Bonner, and then ordered for execution.

The particulars of the last days of bishop Hooper's life are minutely detailed by Fox. The simple and impressive account must be given in his own words. It is, indeed, one of the most affecting narratives in English history. He says, "On Monday at night, being the 4th of February, 1555, bishop Hooper's keeper gave him an intimation that he should be sent to Gloucester to suffer death, whereof he rejoiced very much, lifting up his eyes and hands unto heaven, and praising God that he saw it good to send him amongst the people over whom he was pastor, there to confirm with his death the truth which he had before taught them; not doubting but the Lord would give him strength to perform the same to his glory; and immediately he sent to his servant's house for his boots, spurs, and cloak, that he might be in readiness to ride when he should be called.

"The next day following, about four o'clock in the morning, before daylight, the keeper with others came to him and searched him, and the bed wherein he lay, to see if he had written any thing, and then he was led by the sheriffs of London and their officers from Newgate to a place appointed, not far from St. Dunstan's church in Fleet-street, where six of the

* Perish in prison.

queen's guard were appointed to receive him, and carry him to Gloucester, there to be delivered unto the sheriffs, who with the lord Shandois, master Wikes, and other commissioners, were appointed to see execution done. The guard brought him to the Angel,* where he broke his fast with them, eating his meat at that time more liberally than he had used to do a good while before. About the break of day he went to horse, and leapt cheerfully on horseback without help, having a hood upon his head under his hat that he should not be known, and so took his journey joyfully towards Gloucester, and by the way the guard always learned of him where he was accustomed to bait or lodge, and ever carried him to another inn.

"Upon the Thursday following, he came to a town in his diocese called Cirencester, about eleven o'clock, and there dined at a woman's house who had always hated the truth, and spoken all the evil she could of Master Hooper. This woman, perceiving the cause of his coming, showed him all the friendship she could, and lamented his case with tears, confessing that she before had often reported, that if he were put to the trial, he would not stand to his doctrine.

"After dinner he rode forwards, and came to Gloucester about five o'clock; and a mile without the town much people were assembled, who cried and lamented his state; so that one of the guard rode hastily into the town, to require aid of the mayor and sheriffs, fearing lest he should have been taken from them. The officers and their retinue repaired to the gate with weapons, and commanded the people to keep their houses, but there was no man that gave any signification of any such rescue and violence. So he was lodged at one Ingram's house in Gloucester, and that night, as he had done all the way, he ate his meat quietly, and slept his first sleep soundly. After his first sleep he continued all that night in prayer until the morning, and then he desired that he might go into the next chamber, for the guard were also in the chamber where he lay, that there being alone he might pray and talk with God: so that the whole day, saving a little at meat, and when he talked at any time with such as the guard allowed to speak with him, he employed in prayer.

"Amongst others that spake with him, Sir Anthony Kingston,

* The inn called the Angel, behind St. Clement's church, Strand.

knight, was one, who seeming in times past his very friend, was then appointed by the queen's letters to be one of the commissioners to see execution done upon him. Master Kingston being brought into the chamber found him at prayer; and as soon as he saw Master Hooper, he burst forth in tears. Hooper at the first knew him not. Then said Master Kingston, 'Why, my lord, do you not know me, an old friend of yours, Anthony Kingston?'

"*H.* Yes, Master Kingston, I do now know you well, and am glad to see you in health, and do praise God for the same.

"*K.* But I am sorry to see you in this case; for, as I understand, you are come hither to die. But, alas! consider that life is sweet, and death is bitter. Therefore, seeing life may be had, desire to live; for life hereafter may do good.

"*H.* Indeed it is true, Master Kingston, I am come hither to end this life, and to suffer death here, because I will not gainsay the truth that I have taught amongst you in this diocese, and elsewhere; and I thank you for your friendly counsel, although it be not so friendly as I could have wished it. True it is, Master Kingston, that death is bitter, and life is sweet; but, alas! consider that death to come is more bitter, and the life to come is more sweet. Therefore, for the desire and love I have to the one, and the terror and fear of the other, I do not so much regard this death, nor esteem this life, but have settled myself, through the strength of God's Holy Spirit, patiently to pass through the torments and extremities of the fire now prepared for me, rather than to deny the truth of his word, desiring you and others, in the mean time, to commend me to God's mercy in your prayers.

"*K.* Well, my lord, then I perceive there is no remedy, and, therefore, I will take my leave of you; and I thank God that ever I knew you, for God did appoint you to call me, being a lost child; and by your good instructions, whereas before I was both an adulterer and a fornicator, God hath brought me to forsake and detest the same.

"*H.* If you have had the grace so to do, I do highly praise God for it; and if you have not, I pray God you may have it, and that you may continually live in his fear.

"After these and many other words, the one took leave of the other; Master Kingston with bitter tears, Master Hooper

with tears also trickling down his cheeks. At which departure Master Hooper told him, that all the troubles he had sustained in prison had not caused him to utter so much sorrow.

"The same day in the afternoon, a blind boy, after long intercession made to the guard, obtained license to be brought unto Master Hooper's speech. The same boy not long before had suffered imprisonment at Gloucester for confessing the truth. Master Hooper, after he had examined him of his faith, and the cause of his imprisonment, beheld him steadfastly, and with tears in his eyes, said unto him, 'Ah, poor boy, God hath taken from thee thy outward sight, for what consideration he best knoweth; but he hath given thee another sight much more precious, for he hath endued thy soul with the eye of knowledge and faith. God give thee grace continually to pray unto him, that thou lose not that sight, for then shouldest thou be blind both in body and soul.'*

"After that another came to him, whom he knew to be a very papist and a wicked man, who appeared to be sorry for Master Hooper's trouble, saying, 'Sir, I am sorry to see you thus.'

"'To see me? why art thou sorry?' said he.

"'To see you,' saith the other, 'in this case. For I hear say you are come hither to die, for which I am sorry.'

"'Be sorry for thyself, man,' said Master Hooper, 'and lament thine own wickedness; for I am well, I thank God, and death to me, for Christ's sake, is welcome.'

"The same night he was committed by the guard, their commission being then expired, unto the custody of the sheriffs of Gloucester. The name of the one was Jenkins, the other Bond, who with the mayor and aldermen repaired to Master Hooper's lodgings, and at the first meeting saluted him, and took him by the hand. Unto whom Hooper spake on this manner:

"'Master mayor, I give most hearty thanks to you, and to the rest of your brethren, that you have vouchsafed to take me a prisoner and a condemned man by the hand; whereby, to my rejoicing, it is apparent that your old love and friendship

* The martyr's prayer for this poor blind boy was heard. His name was Drowry, and he was enabled to continue steadfast in the truth. In May, 1556, he was burned.

towards me are not altogether extinguished: and I trust also that all the things I have taught you in times past are not utterly forgotten, when I was here, by the good king that is dead, appointed to be your bishop and pastor. For which true and sincere doctrine, because I will not now account it falsehood and heresy, as many other men do, I am sent hither, as I am sure you know, by the queen's commandment, to die, and am come where I taught it, to confirm it with my blood. And now, master sheriffs, I understand by these good men, and my very friends (meaning the guards),—at whose hands I have found as much favour and gentleness by the way hitherward, as a prisoner could reasonably require, for the which I most heartily thank them,—that I am committed to your custody, as unto them that must see me brought to-morrow to the place of execution. My request to you shall be only, that there may be a quick fire, shortly to make an end, and in the mean time I will be as obedient to you, as yourselves would wish. If you think I do amiss in any thing, hold up your finger, and I have done. *For I am not come hither as one enforced or compelled to die; for it is well known I might have had my life with worldly gain;* but as one willing to offer and give my life for the truth, rather than to consent to the wicked papistical religion of the bishop of Rome, received and set forth by the magistrates in England, to God's high displeasure and dishonour; and I trust, by God's grace, to-morrow to die a faithful servant of God, and a true obedient subject to the queen.'

"These and such like words in effect used Master Hooper to the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen, whereat many of them mourned and lamented. Notwithstanding, the two sheriffs went aside to consult, and were determined to have lodged him in the common jail of the town called Northgate, if the guard had not made earnest intercession for him; declaring how quietly, mildly, and patiently he behaved himself in the way, adding thereto, that any child might keep him well enough, and that they themselves would rather take pains to watch with him, than that he should be sent to the common prison. So it was determined at length that he should still remain in Robert Ingram's house; and the sheriffs and the sergeants and other officers appointed to watch with him that night themselves. His desire was, that he might go that night to bed betimes,

saying, that he had many things to remember: and did so at five of the clock, and slept one sleep soundly, and bestowed the rest of the night in prayer. After he got up in the morning, he desired that no man should be suffered to come into the chamber, that he might be alone till the hour of execution.

"About eight o'clock came sir John Bridges, lord Shandois, with a great band of men, sir Anthony Kingston, sir Edmund Bridges, and other commissioners, appointed to see execution done. At nine o'clock Master Hooper was willed to prepare himself to be in readiness, for the time was at hand. Immediately he was brought down from his chamber by the sheriffs, who were accompanied with bills and other weapons. When he saw the multitude of weapons, he said, 'Master sheriffs, I am no traitor, neither need you have made such a business to bring me to the place where I must suffer; for if you had willed me, I would have gone alone to the stake, and have troubled none of you all.'

"Afterwards, looking upon the multitude of people that were assembled, being by estimation to the number of seven thousand, for it was market-day, and many also came to see his behaviour towards death; he spake unto those that were about him, saying, 'Alas! why are these people assembled and come together? Peradventure, they think to hear something of me now, as they have in times past, but, alas! speech is prohibited me.* Notwithstanding, the cause of my death is well known unto them. When I was appointed to be their pastor, I preached unto them true and sincere doctrine out of the word of God. Because I will not now account the same to be heresy and untruth, this kind of death is prepared for me.'

"So he went forward, led between the two sheriffs, as it were a lamb to the slaughter, in a gown of his host's, his hat upon his head, and a staff in his hand to stay himself withal. For the grief of the sciatica, which he had taken in prison, caused him somewhat to halt. All the way, being strictly charged not to speak, he could not be perceived once to open his mouth; but beholding the people, who mourned bitterly for him, he

* The Romish prelates had threatened Hooper and his companions, that their tongues should be cut out, unless they promised not to address the people at the stake. The queen's letter directing the manner of his execution expressly ordered that he should not be suffered to speak.—See *Burnet*.

would sometimes lift up his eyes toward heaven, and look very cheerfully upon such as he knew; and he was never known, during the time of his being amongst them, to look with so cheerful and ruddy a countenance as he did at that present.

"When he came to the place appointed where he should die, smiling he beheld the stake and preparation made for him, which was near unto the great elm-tree over against the college of priests, where he was wont to preach. The place round about the houses and the boughs of the trees were crowded with people; and in the chamber over the college-gate stood the priests of the college. Then kneeled he down to prayer, forasmuch as he could not be suffered to speak unto the people, and beckoned six or seven times unto one whom he knew well, to hear the said prayer, to make report thereof in time to come, pouring tears upon his shoulders and in his bosom, who gave attentive ears unto the same; which prayer he made upon the whole creed, wherein he continued the space of half an hour. Now, after he was somewhat entered into his prayer, a box was brought and laid before him upon a stool, with his pardon, or at the least it was feigned to be his pardon, from the queen, if he would turn. At the sight whereof he cried, 'If you love my soul, away with it.' The box being taken away, the lord Shandois said, 'Seeing there is no remedy, despatch him quickly.' Master Hooper said, 'Good, my lord, I trust your lordship will give me leave to make an end of my prayers.'

"Then, said the lord Shandois to sir Edmund Bridges's son, who gave ear to Master Hooper's prayer at his request: 'Edmund, take heed that he do nothing else but pray: if he do, tell me, and I shall quickly despatch him.' While this talk was, there stepped forward one or two uncalled, who heard him speak these words following:—

"'Lord, I am hell, but thou art heaven: I am a swill, and a sink of sin, but thou art a gracious God and a merciful Redeemer. Have mercy, therefore, upon me, most miserable and wretched offender, after thy great mercy, and according to thine inestimable goodness. Thou art ascended into heaven; receive me to be partaker of thy joys, where thou sittest in equal glory with thy Father. For well thou knowest, Lord, wherefore I am come hither to suffer, and why the wicked do

persecute this thy poor servant: not for my sins and transgressions committed against thee, but because I will not allow their wicked doings, to the contaminating of thy blood, and to the denial of the knowledge of thy truth, wherewith it did please thee by thy Holy Spirit to instruct me: the which, with as much diligence as a poor wretch might, being thereto called, I have set forth to thy glory. And well seest thou, my Lord and God, what terrible pains and cruel torments are prepared for thy creature; such, Lord, as without thy strength none is able to bear or patiently to pass. But all things that are impossible with man, are possible with thee. Therefore, strengthen me of thy goodness, that in the fire I break not the rule of patience; or else assuage the terror of the pains, as shall seem most to thy glory.'

" When the mayor had espied these men they were commanded away, and were not suffered to hear any more. Prayer being done, he prepared himself for the stake, and put off his host's gown, and delivered it to the sheriffs, requiring them to see it restored unto the owner, and put off the rest of his clothing, unto his doublet and hose, wherein he would have been burned. But the sheriffs would not permit that, such was their greediness, unto whose pleasures he very obediently submitted himself: and his doublet, hose, and waistcoat were taken off. Then being in his shirt, he took a point from his hose himself, and tied his shirt between his legs, where he had a pound of gunpowder in a bladder, and under each arm the like quantity, delivered him by the guard. So desiring the people to say the Lord's prayer with him, and to pray for him, who performed it with tears during the time of his pains, he went up to the stake.

" Now when he was at the stake, three irons, made to bind him to the stake, were brought; one for his neck, another for his middle, and the third for his legs. But he refusing them, said, ' You have no need thus to trouble yourselves. For I doubt not but God will give me strength sufficient to abide the extremity of the fire without bands; notwithstanding, suspecting the frailty and weakness of the flesh, though I have assured confidence in God's strength, I am content that you do as you shall think good.'

" So the hoop of iron, prepared for his middle, was brought,

which being made somewhat too short, for his belly was swollen with imprisonment, he shrank, and put in his belly with his hand, until it was fastened: and when they offered to have bound his neck and legs with the other two hoops of iron, he utterly refused them, and would have none, saying, 'I am well assured I shall not trouble you.'

"Thus being ready, he looked upon the people, of whom he might be well seen, for he was both tall, and stood also on a high stool, and beheld round about him: and in every corner there was nothing to be seen but weeping and sorrowful people. Then lifting up his eyes and hands unto heaven, he prayed to himself. By and by he that was appointed to make the fire came to him, and did ask him forgiveness. He asked 'why he should forgive him, saying, that he never knew any offence he had committed against him.'—'O! sir,' said the man, 'I am appointed to make the fire.'—'Therein,' said Master Hooper, 'thou dost nothing offend me; God forgive thee thy sins, and do thine office, I pray thee.' Then the reeds were cast up, and he received two bundles of them in his own hands, embraced them, kissed them, and put under either arm one of them, and showed with his hand how the rest should be placed.

"Commandment was then given that the fire should be set to, and so it was: but because there were as many green fagots as two horses could carry upon their backs,* it kindled not readily, and was a while also before it took the reeds upon the fagots. At length it burned about him, but the wind having strength in that place—it was also a lowering and cold morning, it blew the flames from him, so that he was in a manner but touched by the fire.

"Sometime after, a few dry fagots were brought, and a new fire was kindled with fagots, for there were no more reeds, and that burnt his lower parts, but had small power above, because of the wind, saving that it did burn his hair, and scorched his skin a little. In the time of this fire, even as at the first flame, he prayed, saying mildly, and not very loud, but as one without pain, 'Oh Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me, and receive my soul.' After the second fire was spent, he wiped his eyes with his hands, and beholding the people, he said with a

* There is reason to believe that the use of green fagots was ordered on this and some other occasions, to make the sufferings of the martyrs more severe and terrifying to the people.

loud voice, 'For God's love, good people, let me have more fire.' And all this while his lower parts did burn; but the fagots were so few that the flames did not burn strongly at his upper parts.

"A third fire was kindled within a while after, which was more extreme than the others: and then the bladders of gunpowder brake, which did him small good, they were so placed, and the wind had such power. In this fire he prayed with somewhat a loud voice; 'Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me: Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And these were the last words he was heard to utter. But when he was black in the mouth, and his tongue swollen, that he could not speak, yet his lips went till they were shrunk to the gums: and he knocked his breast with his hands until one of his arms fell off, and then knocked with the other, until, by renewing of the fire, his strength was gone, and his hand did cleave fast in knocking, to the iron upon his breast. So immediately, bowing forwards, he yielded up his spirit.

"Thus was he three quarters of an hour or more in the fire. Even as a lamb, patiently he bore the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards nor backwards, nor to any side; but having his lower part burnt, and his vitals destroyed, he died as quietly as a child in his bed!

"And now he reigns, as a blessed martyr, in the joys of heaven, prepared for the faithful in Christ, before the foundations of the world: for whose constancy all christians are bound to praise God!"

The works of bishop Hooper are among the most valuable of the writings of the reformers. They also possess a general interest, as they are not so exclusively confined to the Romish controversies, having mostly been written before his imprisonment. He had derived much advantage from his intercourse with the continental reformers, and may be considered as a connecting bond between them and their brethren in England. Fox, Burnet, and Strype bear testimony to the value of his writings in former times: as he thereby being dead yet speaketh; and as his testimony is of Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, we may trust that they will be as acceptable and beneficial to the follower of Christ, now, as they were in the days of our forefathers.

A

DECLARATION

OF

CHRIST AND HIS OFFICE.

COMPILED BY

JOHN HOOPER,

A. D. 1547.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.

CONTENTS.

Chapter.

I. INTRODUCTION.

II. WHAT CHRIST IS.

III. OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

IV. OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

V. OF THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

VI. OF THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

VII. OF JUSTIFICATION.

VIII. OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IX. OF CHRIST'S OFFICE OF SANCTIFYING THOSE THAT BELIEVE IN HIM.

X. THE PRIDE OF THE BISHOP OF ROME CONFUTED.

XI. OF CHRIST AS A KING.

XII. OF WHAT MAN IS.

XIII. THE OFFICE OF A JUSTIFIED MAN.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL

A

DECLARATION

OF

CHRIST AND HIS OFFICE.

CHAPTER. I.

Introduction.

Forasmuch as almighty God, of his infinite mercy and goodness, prepared a mean, whereby Adam and his posterity might be restored again unto their original justice* and perfection, both of body and soul, and live eternally unto the same end that they were created for—to bless and magnify for ever the immortal and living God—it is the office of every true christian, before all other studies, travails, and pains, that he sustains in the time of this brief and miserable life, to apply himself with all diligent force and labour to know perfectly this mean, ordained by God for our salvation; and, the thing once known, diligently with heart, soul, and mind, to follow the mean, until such time as the effect and end be obtained, wherefore it was appointed. The mean was showed unto Adam at his first and original transgression, the Seed of the woman, which should break the head of the serpent, destroy the kingdom of the devil, and restore Adam, and as many as knew and believed in this Seed, unto life everlasting. And as the sin of Adam, the only occasion of all man's misery, was derived unto all his posterity, and they were made subject unto death and the wrath of God for ever: so was this Seed from the beginning a very true and sufficient remedy to as many as believed; and God, for his promise sake, acquitted and delivered man from the right and

* Righteousness.

claim of the devil, and by mercy restored the place, that, by malice and contempt, was lost.

He that would consider diligently these two things, the sin of Adam, and the mercy of God, would find himself far unable to express, or sufficiently think the greatness of the one, or of the other, when they so far pass the reason and understanding of man. All the solace and joy of Adam's posterity consists solely and only in this, (Rom. v.) "Where sin abounded, grace did more abound:" the benefits and merits of this Seed abound, and are more available before the judgment of God, than sin, the flesh, the devil, and the world. This treasure and inestimable riches must be perfectly known of every person that will be saved. It is only in Christ and in the knowledge of him, that what he is, and what is his office can be learned.

CHAPTER II.

What Christ is.

He is the Son of the living God and the virgin Mary: both God and man, the true Messias, promised unto man from the beginning of his fall. Whom St. John calls the Word, of eternal essence and divine majesty, saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John i.) St. Paul (Col. i.) calleth him "the image of God," &c., and (Heb. i.) "the brightness of God." The creed of Nice calleth him "light of light," the natural Son of God, in whom dwelleth the fountain of all divinity naturally. As St. Paul saith, (Col. ii.) "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" meaning, that he is not the Son of God by adoption or acceptation into grace, as Abraham, David, and other holy saints: but naturally the Son of God, equal with the Father in all things, as John saith, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." So St. John proves him in all his writings to be the very true and everlasting God, and not, as Ebion and Cerinthus said, that he was but man only. He was made mortal man, as St. John saith, "And the Word was made flesh," to save the condemned man from immortal death: and to be a Mediator and Intercessor unto God for man. (Matt. xi. John iii. Isa. xi.)

This scripture not only teaches us the knowledge of salvation, but also comforts us against all the assaults, subtleties, and crafts of the devil—that God would of his inestimable love rather suffer his only Son to die for the world, than all the world should perish. Remaining always, as he was, very* God immortal, he received the thing he was not, the mortal nature and true flesh of man, in which he died, as Peter saith, 1 Pet. iv. Irenæus hath these godly words: "Christ was crucified and died, the Word submitting to be crucified and die." The divine nature of Christ was not rent, or torn, or killed, but it obeyed the will of the Father. It gave place unto the displeasure and wrath of God, that the body of Christ might die. Being always equal with his Father, he could, if he had executed his divine power, have delivered his body from the tyranny of the Jews.

These words of Irenæus wonderfully declare unto us what Christ is, and agree with Paul, (Phil. ii.) "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant." Seeing he was sent into the world to suffer this most cruel death and passion, he would do nothing that should be contrary to his vocation, but, with patience praying for his enemies, submitted himself unto the ignominy and contempt of the cross; suffering pains innumerable, without grudge or murmur against the holy will of his Father: his Godhead hiding itself, until the third day, when it restored the soul again unto the body, and caused it to rise with great triumph and glory, (Rom. i. Mat. xxviii. John xx. Luke xxiv. Mark xvi.) repeating the doctrine, which before his death he preached unto the world, that he was both king and lord, high bishop and priest, both of heaven and of earth. "All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth: go, therefore, teach all nations." (Matt. xxviii.)

He that before was most vile and contemptible in the sight of the world, now by right and just title claims the dominion and empire of all the world. How mighty a prince he is, the creation of the world and the preservation thereof declare. How merciful towards them that repent, we know by daily experience in ourselves, and by the example of others, Adam, David, Manasseh, and Peter. How rigorous for sin, the punishment that we suffer and

* "Very," frequently means "true."

the calamities of this world declare, especially the death of his most innocent body. How continual his wrath is against such as repent not, Saul, Pharaoh, Judas, with others, declare. How mighty and fearful a Lord this, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is, read his title and style, (Nahum i.) where the prophet threatens the destruction of Nineveh and the whole kingdom of the Assyrians. As the princes of the world use to declare in their letters patent, of what power, force, and strength they are, and the names of the realms and dominions that they have under their protection and governance, to alarm their enemies, that they should make no resistance, nor move the peace of so mighty a prince: so the prophet gives such a title unto God, to alarm the city of Nineveh and kingdom of the Assyrians, saying, "What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time." This is the style of the God omnipotent, our Saviour Jesus Christ, at whose name all powers bow their knees in heaven, in earth, and in hell. (Phil. ii.)

CHAPTER III.

Of the Priesthood of Christ.

Now that the scripture has taught us to know that Christ is both God and man, I will briefly treat of his office. First, of his priesthood; then of his kingdom and reign over his church till the world's end; then his being for ever in solace with his elect, in perpetual mercy and favour: but with such as contemn in this world his holy commandment and pleasure, he deals in severe justice and hatred and wrath for ever. (John iii.)

St. Paul, in the epistle to the Hebrews, proves him to be the Priest, called by God unto that function and office of the high Bishop; "Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest: but He that said unto him, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' As he saith also in another place, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.'" (Heb. v.) By whose obedience unto the cross he gave everlasting health* to as many as obeyed him. And in all things he executed the very true

* Salvation.

office of a bishop, to whom it appertained to teach the people; which was the chief part of the bishop's office, and most diligently and strictly commanded by God. As all the books of Moses and the prophets teach, and Christ commanded Peter: (John xx.) and Paul all the bishops and priests of his time. (Acts xx.)

Of Christ's authority and preaching, Moses and Stephen (Acts vii. Deut. xviii.) say thus, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him ye shall hear." He that will not hearken unto his voice shall be as none of the people of God. This authority to preach, the Father gave unto him in the hearing of the apostles, (Matt. iii. 17,) and bound his church to receive his doctrine, saying, "This is my dearly beloved Son, in whom I delight, hear him." He taught the will of his Father unto the world, and how they might be saved from death infernal, (John xvii. 6.) provided that they repented and believed the gospel. (Matt. iii. Mark x.) He left nothing untaught, but as a good doctor,* manifested unto his audience all things necessary for the health of man. As the woman confessed, (John iv.) "Messias, when he is come, will tell us all things." He not only preached himself, but sent his apostles and disciples to manifest unto the world, that the acceptable time of grace was come, and the sacrifice for sin born into the world. (Matt. x. John x.) And after his resurrection he gave them commandment to preach, and likewise what they should preach. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel, which I have taught you, to every creature." (Matt. xxviii. Mark xvi.) The which doctrine Luke thus expounds: "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke xxiv.) "In his name," that is to say, "in the knowledge and faith of his merits, they should preach repentance and remission of sin unto all the world: as they did most sincerely and plainly, without any glosses or additions of their own invention, and were as testimonies of the truth, and not the authors thereof." (Acts i. John i.)

So Paul teaches with gravity and manifest words, what is to be judged of himself and all other ministers: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed

* Teacher.

unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v.) Always in their doctrine they taught the thing, that Christ first taught, and God's Holy Spirit inspired them. (Gal. i. 2 Cor. iii.) Holy apostles never took upon them to be Christ's vicars in the earth, nor to be his lieutenants: but said, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv.) In the same epistle he binds the Corinthians to follow him in nothing but where he followed Christ, (chap. xi.) "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." They ministered not in the church, as though Christ was absent, although his most glorious body was departed corporeally into the heavens above; but as Christ present, who always governed his church with his Spirit of truth, as he promised, (Matt. xxviii.) "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

In the absence of his body, he has commended the protection and governance of his church unto the Holy Ghost, the same God, and one God with the Father and his divine nature. Whose divine puissance and power overmatches the force of the devil, so that hell itself cannot take one of Christ's flock out of God's protection. (John x.) And this defence dureth not for a day, nor year, but shall demour* for ever, till this church be glorified at the resurrection of the flesh. (John xv.)

It was no little pain that Christ suffered in washing away the sins of this church: therefore he will not commit the defence thereof unto man. It is no less glory to defend and keep the thing won by force, than it is by force to obtain the victory. Adam, Abel, Abraham, Moses, or Aaron could not win this church out of the devil's tyranny: no more can they defend it, when delivered. For although by imputation of Christ's justice† those men and all other faithful ones be delivered from the tyranny of the devil and condemnation of the law, yet the devil had and hath his very friends dwelling within the corrupt nature of man, as long as he liveth. The concupiscence and rebellion of man's nature ceases not day nor night to betray man again to the devil, except with the motion of true penitence this concupiscence be kept under in fear and

* Remain. † Righteousness.

faith; which two virtues are so infirm in man, that be he ever so perfect, he falls from God sometimes, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron. (Isa. xliii. Num. xxi.) Therefore Christ keeps the defence and governance of the church only and solely himself, in whom the devil hath not a jot of right. Though the apostles were instructed in all truth, and left the same written unto his church; yet were they ministers, servants, testimonies, and preachers of this verity, and not Christ's vicars in earth and lieutenants to keep the keys of heaven, hell, and purgatory: but only appointed to approve the thing to be good, that God's laws commanded; and that to be ill, which the word of God condemned.

Seeing that Christ governs his church always by his Holy Spirit, and binds all the ministers thereof unto the sole word of God, what abomination is this, that any bishop of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, or elsewhere, should claim to be Christ's vicar in earth, and take upon him to make any laws in the church of God, to bind the consciences of man, beside the word of God; and, in placing their superstition and idolatry, put the word of God out of its place! By what law, by whom, or where, hath any this title given unto him, to be God's vicar and lieutenant upon the earth?

Moses, the best prince that ever was, and most godly governor of the people; Aaron, that faithful high-priest and preacher of God's word, never usurped this title, to be as a second Christ and master over men's consciences. If godly Moses and his brother Aaron never claimed this title in the earth, doubtless, it is a foul and detestable arrogance, that these ungodly bishops of Rome attribute unto themselves to be the heads of Christ's church, and the more it is to be lamented. He that considers their life, and compares it with the scripture, will judge by the authority thereof, that they were not, for these many years, worthy to be accounted any members of God's church, but the members of the devil, and the first begotten of antichrist.

This is true, the see of Rome is not only a tyranny and pestilence of body and soul, but the nest of all abomination. God give him grace and all his successors, to leave their abomination, and to come unto the light of God's word! This beast is preached unto the people to be a man, that cannot err; his authority to be above God and

his laws; and to be the prince upon the earth of all princes. But God will judge him, as he is a murderer of both body and soul, and punish the princes of the world, that uphold his abomination.

Moses and Aaron, by the testimony of the scripture, never taught, excepting that which they received of God, and at the last they both offended (Num. xx.): insomuch, that God gave sentence against them, that neither of them should enter into the land of promise for their arrogance and pride. The text saith, "Because ye were unfaithful unto me." This false belief was not of any doubt they had in the power of God; for the miracle was done, as God said: but that they attributed too much unto their own power, and said: "Hear now, ye rebels, must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?" For the changing of the *third* person in this sentence into the *first*, the wrath of God pronounced sentence of death against these two very godly ministers of his word. They sinned, because they said not; "Hear, ye rebellious, cannot Jehovah, the omnipotent, give you water out of this stone?" And is this first begotten of antichrist, the bishop of Rome, without sin, who changes not only the person in a sentence, but the whole sentence, yea, the whole law of God and of man? So that he reigns in the conscience above the law of God, and will save him, whom God hath damned, and damn him, whom God hath saved; yet we are told this person and man of sin cannot err! But he that spared not to kill good Moses and Aaron for the abuse of the word of God, will not favour this wicked man, nor any of his *holy* doctors, at the terrible day of judgment.

Nahum, the prophet, gives to God a wonderful name, which neither the Latin nor the Greek can properly express without circumlocution, it is as if he retained a remembrance of injuries, and reserved the occasion of vengeance. He is the God, that writes all blasphemies in his book of remembrance, and when he has showed his mercy sufficiently, he revenges the evil that man thinks is forgotten. It is of his superabundant mercy, that he throws not suddenly fire upon the world for sin; and not that he is asleep, or cannot do it. Right well judged Valerius Maximus, and better than now the most part of Christian men: "The divine wrath proceedeth with slow pace to its vengeance. But it will make up for its slowness by the weight of punishment."

Because God hath given this light unto my countrymen,* who are all persuaded, or may God send them to be persuaded, that neither the bishop of Rome nor any other, is Christ's vicar upon the earth, there is no need to use any long or copious oration; it is so plain, that it needs no probation. The very properties of antichrist, I mean of Christ's great and principal enemy, are so openly known to all men, that are not blinded with the smoke of Rome, that they know him to be the beast, which John describes in the Apocalypse.

This knowledge of Christ's supremacy and continual presence in the church admits no lieutenant nor general vicar. Likewise it admits not the decrees and laws of men, brought into the church contrary unto the word and scripture of God, which is sufficient alone to teach all verity and truth for the salvation of man, as will appear in the chapter following.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Authority of the Word of God.

Christ, the only light of the world, sent from his Father, and born mortal man, according unto the scripture, began to teach the word of God purely and sincerely unto the world, and chose ministers and apostles convenient for the sending forth thereof; and being approved to be the very Messias by God the Father (Matt. iii. John v.), he taught his disciples the truth by the only law written by Moses and the prophets, and not by unwritten verities. And in all controversies and doubtful questions he answered his opponents by the word of God. In that wonderful temptation of the devil (Matt. iv.), by collation of the places of scripture he overcame the devil, (falsely and in a wrong sense alleging the word of God,) with his own sword, by the word of God godly applied.

When his disciples were reprehended by the pharisees, as breakers of the sabbath (Matt. xii.), he excused their conduct by the law, "Have ye not read what David did, and those which were with him?" So likewise (Matt. xv.) in all controversies he made the law judge between his enemies and himself. When he was desired to teach a

* This tract was written in the reign of king Edward VIth.

young man the way to heaven, and to come to everlasting life, he said, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" (Matt. xxii.)

Likewise to the Sadducees that denied the resurrection of the dead: "Ye err (said he), not knowing the scriptures and the word of God." The rich man in hell, who was so desirous that his brothers living in the earth might have knowledge and warning to beware that they were not damned in time to come, would gladly have warned them himself, for the more surety (Luke xvi.) that the message should be done. Abraham answered, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." The scripture teaches what heaven, hell, and what man are, and what Christ is: therefore Christ sendeth us thither. (John v.) "Search the scriptures," said he.

Again, being asked in a civil matter concerning tribute and obedience unto the princes of the world, (Matt. xxii.) he said, "Give unto the emperor that which is due unto the emperor, and unto God that which is due unto God." And under the name of the emperor he understands all superior powers appointed over the people by God, and requires us to give due honour unto both, as Paul teaches. (Rom. xiii. 1 Pet. ii.)

This law teaches man sufficiently, as well what he is bound to do unto God, as unto the princes of the world. Nothing can be desired necessary for man, but it is prescribed in this law: of what degree, vocation, or calling soever he be, his duty is showed unto him in the scripture. And in this it differs from man's laws, because it is absolute, perfect, and never to be changed; nothing to be added unto it, nor taken from it. And the church of Christ, the more it was and is burdened with man's laws, the farther it is from the true and sincere verity of God's word. The more man presumes and takes authority to interpret the scripture after his own brain and subtle wit, and not as the verity of the text requires, the more he dishonours the scripture, and blasphemes God, the author thereof.

It is the office of a good man to teach the church, as Christ taught, to revoke all errors, and bring back such as err unto the fold of Christ, only by the word of Christ. For the water at the fountain-head is more wholesome and pure, than when it is carried abroad in rotten pipes or stinking ditches. I had rather follow the shadow of Christ,

than the body of all the general councils or doctors since the death of Christ. The devil has never slept, but always by his ministers attempted to destroy the verity of Christ's religion, and quite to put out the light of truth, which was perfect in Christ's time and in the time of the apostles. None since that time so pure. St. Jerome saith, that his time was darkness compared with the apostles' time.

The antiquity of the world darkens the verity of God's word; as Varro saith the truth, "that age corrupteth and taketh away many things;" and "the third century doth not see the same man, which the first saw." The truth of God's verity, the more it is used, practised, and taught, after the wisdom of man, the more is the glory and perfection thereof darkened. It is the contrary in all human arts, as Cicero saith: "In human discoveries nothing is invented and perfected all at once, but is improved by use and practice; so that the arts of every kind are more advanced in excellence, the farther they are removed from their first origin and inventors."

The church of God must therefore be bound to no other authority than unto the voice of the gospel and unto the ministry thereof, as Isaiah saith (chap. viii.), "Seal the law among my disciples." The prophet speaketh of such darkness, as should follow his time, concerning the coming of Messias, the true teacher of the church. Therefore he prayed to preserve the true heirs of the promise, and that it would please him to confirm the doctrine of truth in their hearts, lest the word, and true understanding of the word, should be put out by the devil. And seeing the church is bound unto this infallible truth, the only word of God, it is a false and usurped authority that men attribute unto the clergy, and bind the word of God and Christ's church to the succession of bishops, or any college of cardinals, schools, ministries, or cathedral churches.

Paul would have no man to give faith to any person or minister in the church of God, but when he preaches the word of God truly. (Gal. i.) Men may have the gift of God to understand and interpret the scripture unto others, but they never have authority to interpret it, otherwise than it interprets itself; which the godly mind of man by study, meditation, and comparing one place with the other, may find; howbeit some more, some less, as God gives his grace. For the punishment of our sins God leaves in all men great imperfection; and such as were endued

with excellent wit and learning saw not always the truth. As it is to be seen in Basilius, Ambrose, Epiphanius, Augustine, Bernard, and others, though they stayed themselves in the knowledge of Christ, and erred not in any principal article of the faith: yet they did inordinately and more than enough extol the doctrine and tradition of men; and after the death of the apostles every doctor's time was subject unto such ceremony and man's decrees, as were neither profitable nor necessary. Therefore Paul diligently exhorted the church of Christ principally to consider and regard the foundation of all verity; meaning that doctors of the church had their imperfection and faults. "Other foundation, saith he, can no man lay, besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In these few words is established all our faith, and all false religion is reprehended.

Upon this foundation some men build gold, that is to say, godly and necessary doctrine. As Polycarp, who confuted the heresy of Marcion, on the being of God—of the causes of sin—that the devil and man are the cause of sin, and not God, nor fatal destiny, nor the influence or aspects of the planets. He maintained the true religion of God, and governed the church as the scripture taught, which he learned of John the evangelist, and defended this truth with wonderful constancy and martyrdom.

Basil and many others retained the articles of the faith; but they instituted the life and rule of monks, and preferred that kind of life before the life of such as govern in the commonwealth the people of God; and persuaded men that such kind of life was a very divine and acceptable honouring of God.

After him followed such as augmented this evil, and said, it was not only acceptable unto God, but also that men might deserve therewith remission of sin.

Thus by a little and a little the devil augmented superstition, and diminished the truth of God's glory; so that we see no where the church of Christ, as it was in the apostles' time. Though many and godly verities have been brought unto light in our time by men of divers graces, yet the truth of necessary verities is not plainly showed by them. Lest man should too much glory in himself, God has permitted them to err in certain points: as Luther, of blessed memory, who wrote and preached the gospel of justification, no man better; yet in the cause of the sacrament he erred concerning the corporeal presence

of Christ's natural body, so that there is no man can err more. I shall have occasion to write the truth concerning this matter hereafter. It is no reproach of the dead man, but mine opinion unto all the world, that the scripture solely and the apostles' church is to be followed, and no man's authority, be he Augustine, Tertullian, or even cherubim or seraphim.

Unto the rules and canons of the scripture must man trust, and reform his errors thereby, or else he shall not reform himself, but rather deform his conscience. The church of the Romans, Corinthians, and others, the seven churches that John writeth of in the Apocalypse, were in all things reformed unto the rule and form prescribed by the everlasting God. The image of these churches I always print in my mind. And wheresoever I come, I look how near they resemble those before mentioned, and whether their preachers preach simply without dispensation of any part of God's most necessary word; and whether all the occasions of idolatry be taken away, as images, which Gregory calls the books of the laymen, though this title is against the second commandment, and never approved by the Old Testament nor the New, by word or example.

Where the occasion is not removed, the word of God must needs stand in hazard; for God will not (say the wisdom of man what it list) have his church pestered with any kind of idolatry; and to make God and the devil agree in one church, is impossible. St. John hath wonderful words in the Apocalypse, (chap. iii.) unto the church of the Laodiceans: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." These words are very necessary to be borne in mind. For he that is neither hot nor cold, but indifferent to use the knowledge of God's word and Christ's church with the word and gloss of man; and that teaches the use of images in the church, before he can prove by the authority of God's word that they may be suffered in the church, doth not well. They have been the occasion of great hurt and idolatry. The church of the Old Testament and the New never taught the people with images.

Therefore, it shall be the office of every man that loves God and his word, to follow the scripture only, and to bewail the ignorance of such as have, before our time, or

now in our time, by words or writing defended the same; and with all humility submit himself to the judgment and censure of the judge of all judges, the word of God, that he may wisely and godly discern what is to be believed and accepted of any doctor's writings, and what is not to be accepted; what is to be pardoned, and what is not to be pardoned; and by the perils and dangers of others learn to be wise, that we commit not the same fault.

A fine gloss and free interpretation cannot make an ill thing good. If I should say, an image provokes devotion, or that holy water teaches that the blood of Christ was sprinkled for my sins, and the holy bread teaches that Christ's body was torn for my sins, what shall these glosses excuse the deed? Nay, nay, Christ, who died for our sakes, would not have his death preached this way; but out of the scripture by the tongue of man, and not out of the decrees of bishops by a drop of water or a painted post. He that took the pains to die and suffer his passion for the redemption of the world solely and only, solely and only has taken the pains to teach the world how and which way they should keep this passion in mind, and he left it unto the world in writing by the hands of his holy apostles; unto which writing only he has bound and obligated his church, and not to the writings of men.

In this passage I admonish the christian reader, that I speak not of the laws of magistrates or princes, who daily ordain new laws for the preservation of their commonwealth, as they see the necessity of their realms or cities requires; but of such laws as men have ordained for the church of Christ, which should be now and for ever governed by the word of God. In this case, like as Eve offended, obeying the persuasion of the devil contrary unto the commandment of God, so doth every man offend, by obeying any laws or decrees that command any thing contrary unto the word of God. This law must prevail, "We must obey God, rather than man." The example hereof we have in Daniel, of the three children who chose rather to burn in the fiery furnace, than to worship the image that Nebuchadnezzar had made. So did the apostles. (Acts v.)

Let all the world consider, whether such laws of the bishops, as the mass, which is a profanation of Christ's Supper, to bind men's consciences to pray unto dead

saints; to say, that images are to be suffered in the temples; and to constrain the ministers of the church to live unmarried, contrary to their vocation, are to be obeyed or not. They do no less offend God in obeying these laws, than Eve did in obeying the voice of the serpent. The wisdom of all the wits in the world cannot comprehend the greatness of this ill. Make what laws they will for the body, so they leave the conscience free, it is to be suffered with patience; only I lament the bondage of the conscience. Cursed be those that make such laws, and cursed be those that with sophistry defend them. That parasite and bondman of the bishop of Rome, Pighius, in his writings is not ashamed to say, "It is less sin for a priest to keep another man's wife, than to have a wife of his own!"

Concerning indifferent acts, which of themselves are neither good nor ill, as, to refrain from eating of flesh on the Friday, observing of the feasts kept holy in the remembrance of such holy martyrs as died for the faith of Christ, or in keeping holy Easter and Whitsunday; there are two respects most diligently to be observed, the one good, and to be suffered; the other ill, and to be eschewed.* Such as abstain from flesh, and think they do better service to God, and would likewise obtain remission of their sins by those works, declare both themselves and their works to be ill. But such as abstain that the spirit may be more ardent, and the mind more given to study and prayer, do well, and as they are bound to do. And they who come unto the temple to pray for themselves and the church of Christ, and to hear the word of God, do well. For, as God commands his word to be preached and heard, so he has appointed a certain time, as the Sabbath, when people should hear it. And not only is this order to be observed in the church, but, also, in every family and household, of what degree soever they be. Each should cause his family and children to read some part of the Bible for their erudition, to know God. Likewise, he should constrain them to pray unto God for the promotion of his holy word, and for the preservation of the governors of the commonwealth, so that no day should pass without prayer and augmentation of knowledge in the religion of Christ.

But our new evangelists have another opinion; they dream of faith that justifieth, which neither repentance

* Avoided, refused.

precedes, nor honesty of life follows—which shall be to their double damnation, if they amend not. He that will conform his knowledge unto the word of God, let him, likewise, convert his life withal, as the word requires, and as all the examples of Christ and his gospel teach; or else what will he do with the doctrine of Christ, which only teaches, and sufficiently teaches, all verity and virtuous life? Let him tarry still in the doctrine of man, and live as manly* and as carnally as he list, and not profess to know God, nor his truth, rather than so slander them both! This suffices to prove that the word of God alone is sufficient to teach the truth. All other men's laws are neither necessary nor profitable; and certain we are, that the church of the apostles had not those decrees that papistry of late days faithed† the church withal.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Intercession of Christ.

The second office of Christ is to pray and to make intercession for his people. This office John writes of in his first epistle: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, that maketh intercession for us." And as Paul saith, "Christ, who was dead, yea, who is also raised again, who is even at the right hand of God: who also intercedeth for us." In his name, and in the belief and confidence of his merits, we may obtain the mercies of God and life everlasting, as Paul saith: "Let us with confidence draw nigh to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." This intercession of Christ alone suffices. No man should seek any other mediator of intercession or expiation of sin, as Paul saith, declaring the sufficiency and ability of Christ's death and intercession. "Christ remaineth for ever, having a perpetual priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him; being alway living to this end, that he may intercede for them."

Unto this intercession and prayer in Christ's name he bound his church by express commandment: "Ask, and

* After the manner of men. † Taught as matters of faith.

it shall be given you." And in the same place he shows the cause wherefore it shall be given. "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, it shall be given unto you." (John xiv. xv.) St. Paul calls Christ, sitting at the right hand of God, the minister and servant of the saints; that is to say, of such as are here living in this troubled and persecuted church, to solicit and do all their affairs, as a faithful ambassador with the Father of heaven, until the consummation of the world.

This doctrine of Christ's intercession must be always diligently preached unto the people; and, likewise, that in all necessities, calamities, and trouble, the afflicted person must seek no other means to offer his prayers unto God, but Christ only, according as the scripture teacheth, and as we have the example of holy saints in the same. Not only in the New Testament, where he commands us to pray in his name; and Stephen in his martyrdom commended his spirit unto this only Mediator, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." But also in the Old Testament thus prayed the patriarchs and prophets. Jacob said, (Gen. xlviii.) "God and the angel who delivered me from all evil, bless these lads." And David, (Psa. lxxii.) "And they shall worship him alway." Forasmuch as Christ is daily in heaven, and prayeth for his church, the church of Christ must pray, as Christ hath taught it; as the patriarchs, prophets, and the apostles have given us examples, who never prayed unto dead saints; yea, as Christ hath given us an example, hanging on the cross, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

What intolerable ill blasphemy of God and ethnical* idolatry is this, to admit and teach the invocation of saints departed out of this world! It takes from God his true honour; it makes him as nothing, who hath ordained Christ alone to be Mediator between man and him; it diminishes the merits of Christ, and takes from the law of God its perfection and majesty; whereas God hath opened his will and pleasure unto the world in all things. It condemns the old church of the patriarchs and prophets, likewise the church of the apostles and martyrs, who never thought of the invocation of saints. It accuses the scripture of God to be false, which saith, "Thou shalt neither add, neither diminish any thing:" it makes Christ a liar, who said, "The Spirit, whom I will send from the Father,

* Heathen.

he shall teach you all truth." If the men that teach, "Holy Mary, pray for us," be more holy than all the patriarchs, or prophets and apostles, let the conscience of the christian reader judge.

This distinction of mediators, to be one of expiation for sin, namely, Christ; and another for intercession, namely, the saints departed, is naught: it repugneth* the manifest text of the scripture. It is the office only of Christ to be the mediator for sin, and likewise to offer the prayers of the church to his Father. (John i.) "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." As concerning intercession, he commands us to ask only in his name, and prescribed the manner how to ask, and what to ask. (Luke xi.)

As for such as say, "If the saints that we pray unto, hear us not, nor profit a deal, yet it hinders not, we lose but our labour." Thus much it hindereth, it declares him that prayeth to be an infidel. To pray unto that god or goddess, who is not able to help him, nor hear his prayers, is to be no better than he that prayed unto the image of Jupiter in Crete, which had neither ears nor eyes. It declares him to contemn both God and his word, who assures every man, in every time, and in every distress, not only to hear him, but also to give aid. (Matt. xi.) So now this worshipper of saints departs from the known and almighty God to an unknown god, and prefers the doctrine of man and the devil before the scripture of truth and the living God. I hope this detestable error is come to light, and all men taught to pray as the canonical scripture teaches.

But there is another evil as great as this, to be reprehended by all such as know how to pray aright—the being of images in the temple, which the world saith may be suffered in the churches, and saith they are good to put the people of God in remembrance of such godly saints as died for Christ's sake. But this is always the subtlety of the devil, when a manifest ill cannot be borne withal, to seek a gloss and interpretation, that whereas he cannot walk in the church openly like a devil, and have candles stuck before a post, and the images kissed, yet he desires some man to put a fair coat upon his back, that he may have a place in the church to lurk in, until such time as occasion be ministered to show himself again as he is.

* Opposes, denies.

The authority of God's word requires me to pronounce this true judgment in the cause of images, that they be not worshipped in the church—that their presence in the church is against God's word, as well as to say, "Holy Mary, pray for us." And as the one is to be eschewed and banished out of the heart, so is the other out of the eye, in the temple, where God's word is preached unto the people, and the sacraments ministered.

This I prove by the authority of both Testaments, the Old and the New. The Old saith, "Thou shalt make no image." (Exod. xx. Deut. v.) In the New there is no mention made of any image; but Christ concerning the law and precepts of the commandments said: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil the law." (Matt. v.) Forasmuch as Christ left the commandments of the old law unto the church, in the which he saith, "Thou shalt not make any image;" from whence have these men authority that say, if images be not honoured, they may be suffered in the church? It is but their opinion, contrary and beside the law of God. And this commandment, "Thou shalt not make"—"thou shalt not worship," forbids as well the making of the image, as the honouring of it. Concerning having them in the place of public prayer, and in the use of the sacraments, such as would have this occasion of idolatry to remain in the church, by divison of the commandments would pass over the second commandment, which saith, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, thou shalt not worship it;" and make of the tenth commandment two commandments.* But the text will not suffer it. For as the Lord there forbids the inward lust and concupiscence of his neighbour's house, so he forbids the lust and concupiscence of his neighbour's wife, servant, or daughter, and it is all but one commandment (Exod. xx.): read the text in the Hebrew, and then it will be more plain.

The second commandment, which the defenders of images neglect, forbids not only the outward reverence and honour, but, also, by the same express commandment forbids to *make* any image. They do injury to the manifest text, and their gloss is to be abhorred, and the plain text to be followed.

The king's majesty that is dead,† willed not only all his

* See the popular Roman catholic catechisms in every country.
† Henry VIII.

true subjects to have no familiarity with cardinal Pole, but also to refrain from his company, and not to have to do with him in any case; and this not without good and necessary consideration. He that would, notwithstanding this command of the king's majesty, have haunted Pole's company, and at the time of his accusation have said, he was not with Pole for friendship or familiarity, to do him any honour, but haunted his company with such other persons as meant no ill to the king's majesty or his realm; doubtless, this law would of right and equity condemn him; for neither for friendship, neither other cause, should any man use his company. Doubtless, as the king's majesty and every other prince knows it to be dangerous to suffer his subjects daily to be in the company of his traitorous enemies; so God knew right well what danger it was to suffer man, his creature, to have company with those idols, and therefore said, "Thou shalt neither worship them nor make them." All the princes of the earth have not had so many subjects betrayed and made traitors by their enemies, as God has lost souls by the means of images. I make all the world judge that know the truth.

It is so childish an opinion to say that images may be suffered in the church, if they be not honoured, that it needs no probation at all.* The gentiles, whom St. Paul speaketh of (Rom. i.), knew right well that the idol was not God. And all the idolaters that used images, which the New Testament speaks of (1 Cor. viii. and x. 1 Pet. iv. 1 John v.), knew right well that those images of gold or silver were not the devil that they worshipped. The apostles condemned not only their false religion, but also their images. John by express words calleth the image idolatry, and bids them beware of images, saying, "Keep yourselves from images." David (Psa. cxv.) saith, "The idols of the gentiles are silver and gold." He condemns not only their false religion, but also the images made by the hand of man, which were of gold and silver. Their false god was neither gold, nor silver, but a wicked spirit, who, for lack of faith, had entered into their spirits.

It is to be lamented, that God for our sins thus suffers the world to be deluded by the devil. Of late years, the images were in the temples, and honoured with paternoster,† heart and mind, with leg and knee. This use of images is taken away in many places, but now they are

* Requires no proof, is beyond doubt. † Prayers offered to them.

applied to another use, namely, to teach the people and to be the laymen's books! As Damascene and many others say, Oh! blasphemous and devilish doctrine, to appoint the most noble creature of God—man, endued with wit and reason, resembling the image of the everlasting God, to be instructed and taught by a mute, dumb, blind, and dead idol! The brute beast that goes by the way, and the ass that serves for the mill, is not taught by the rod of the carter, but by the prudence of him that uses the rod; and should those painted blocks be the books of reasonable man? Full well can the devil transform himself into an angel of light, and deceive the people under the pretence of true religion. I had rather trust to the shadow of the church which the scripture teaches, than to all the men's writings since the death of Polycarp.

Christ saith not, "Go preach unto the people by images;" but he said, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel." (Matt. xxviii.) They say, that images adorn and seemly deck the temple of God; whereas, the people resort to hear the word of God, so the more images, the more dishonoured is the temple. Let them first teach by the manifest word of God, that the temple should be decked with such idols as cannot teach nor speak. Some man's tongue must declare the history of the idol, or else they know not what the idol is; peradventure, take St. Barbara for St. Catherine, and St. Concumbre for the rood* of Paul; or Balaam and his ass, that for lucre attempted to curse the church of God, for Christ and his ass that came to bless and sanctify his church with his precious blood. It is the abuse and profanation of the temple to suffer them, and a great occasion for people to return to their accustomed ill. I would all men should indifferently† ponder these reasons, and judge whether they are to be suffered or not.

The most perfect churches of the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, used no such means to instruct the people. We ought to follow them, and the word of God written by the prophets and apostles. Also, the Greek church never consented willingly to admit the use of images in the temples.‡ The ill that hath happened unto the people by

* Image. † Impartially.

‡ The Greek church resisted the introduction of the representations of saints long after image worship had been received by the Latin or Roman church.

the means of images is too plain and well known—God by idolatry is robbed of his glory, and the idolater disinherited of God's mercy, except he repent in this life. An image once brought into the church lives a long time. Grant, that at the beginning there was a good preacher in the church, the preacher dies: the idol, the longer it liveth the younger it waxes, as you may see by the idols of Walsingham, Canterbury, and Hales. They flourished most a little before their desolation in the reign of the king's majesty that is dead, Henry VIII. of a blessed memory. At their setting up I suppose the preachers were more diligent and zealous of God's glory than afterward. But was not the original damnable against the word of God, to give the people such a book to learn by, that should school them to the devil?

The words of Gregory to Serenus, bishop of the Massilians, should move no man, though he say, "What the scripture is to those that read, the same does the picture afford to the eyes of those who cannot;" and reprehends Serenus for breaking of images, saying, the like was not seen done by any other minister. This is but St. Gregory's opinion. Epiphanius, writing in a certain epistle to John, bishop of Jerusalem, desires the occasion of ill to be taken out of the church, as Paul commands. (1 Thess. v.) This doctor, as all men know, was of singular learning and virtue.

Again, against the authority of Gregory the great, I set the authority of Athanasius the great, who denies by express words images to be the books of the lay people. With great gravity and godly reasons this great clerk* confutes this fond opinion, that images are to be the books of the laymen.

The great and excellent clerk Lactantius cries so out against images, that he saith there can be no true religion where they are. Tertullian judges the same. The law of God and these holy doctors not only condemn the use of them in the church, but also the name of an image declares it to be an abomination.

Read all the scripture, and in every place where thou findest this word, *ezeb*, idol or image, it signifies either affliction, rebellion, sorrow, sadness, travail or pain, or else the wicked *muk* and mammon of the world, or the thing that always provokes the ire of God, as rabbi David

* Learned man.

Kymhy well expoundeth Psalm cxv. This Jew saith, that the idols bring men into hatred of God, expounding these words of David, "Like unto them are all they that put their trust in them:" he saith the text must be understood by the manner of prayer, as though David prayed almighty God to make these gravers and carvers of images as dumb, as blind, as mute, and as insensible, as the idol that can neither speak nor hear. Our Lord amend it!

What should move men to defend in the church of Christ so unnecessary an ill, and pestilent treasure, that has seduced both our fathers and great-grandfathers? whereas, the church of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, never used them, but in all their writings abhorred them. If we loved God, we should be content with scripture. Every scholar of Aristotle takes this for a sufficient verity, "The master saith so:" he will be contented as soon as he hears his master's name. Cicero (lib. iii. *De Oratore*) was thus persuaded of those that were excellent orators, "and so esteems the suavity of Isocrates, the subtlety of Lysias, the acumen of Hyperides, the eloquence of Æschines, the power of Demosthenes, and the oratory of Catullus: that whatsoever, saith he, you add, or change, or take away, it will become thereby worse." And should not the patriarchs, prophets, Christ, and the apostles, as well suffice the church of God?

What, although many learned men have approved of images, should their wisdom maintain any thing contrary unto the word of God? No: a christian man must not care who speaks, but what is spoken; the truth is to be accepted, whosoever speaks it. Balaam was as wise, learned, and replenished with God's gift, as man could be; notwithstanding, his ass telling the truth must be believed rather than he. The law of God teaches no use of images, but saith, "Thou shalt not make, thou shalt not worship it," (Exod. xx.) believe it. Yet the art of graving and painting is the gift of God. To have the picture or image of any martyr or others, so they be not put in the temple of God, nor otherwise abused, may be suffered. Christ by the picture of Cæsar taught his audience obedience unto the civil prince, saying: "Whose image is this? They say to him, Cæsar's: therefore render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's."

But if man will learn to know God by his creatures, let him not say "Good morrow, master," to an old

moth-eaten post, but behold the heavens which declare the mighty power of God. Consider the earth, how it brings forth the fruits thereof, the water with fishes, the air with birds. Consider the disposition, order, and amity, that is between the members of man's body, the one always ready to help the other, and to save the other: the hand the head, the head the foot, the stomach to disperse the meat and drink into the external parts of the body. Yea, let man consider the hawk and the hound, that obey in their vocation, and so every other creature of the earth; and let him with true heart and unfeigned penitence come to the knowledge of himself, and say, "All the creatures that ever the living God made, obey in their vocation, saving the devil, and I, most wretched man."

Those things were made to be testimonies unto us of God's mighty power, and to draw men unto virtue, not to the idols which the devil caused to be set in the temple to bring men from God. Thus did Christ teach the people his most blessed death and passion, and the fruit of his passion by the grain of corn cast into the earth. He hanged not the picture of his body upon the cross, to teach them his death, as our late learned men have done.

The ploughman, be he ever so unlearned, shall better be instructed of Christ's death and passion by the corn that he soweth in the field, and likewise of Christ's resurrection, than by all the dead posts that hang in the church, or are pulled out of the sepulchre with, "Christ is risen." What resemblance hath the taking of the cross out of the sepulchre and going a procession with it, with the resurrection of Christ?* None at all; the dead post is as dead, when they sing, "Now he is not dead," as it was, when they buried it with, "His grave is made in peace." If any preacher would manifest the resurrection of Christ unto the senses, why does not he teach them by the grain of the field that is risen out of the earth, and comes of the dead corn that he sowed in the winter? Why doth not the preacher preach the death and resurrection of Christ by such figures and metaphors as the scripture teaches? Paul wonderfully (1 Cor. xv.) proves with arguments the death and resurrection of Christ, and ours likewise, so that nothing may be more plainly taught.

A dead post carried in procession as much resembles

* Part of the Romish service on Easter day.

the resurrection of Christ, as death itself resembles life. People should not be taught either by images or by relics, as Erasmus in his third book of Ecclesiastes well declares. Lactantius uses a wonderful, divine, eloquent, and plain manner in the declaring of this resurrection, which is sung yearly in the church concerning Easter-day, with many godly and divine verses. The same Lactantius saith, that there can be no true religion where these images are. Augustine reprehends them wonderfully in these words of David, "Mouths have they, and speak not;" and saith, Men may be soon deceived by images.

Such as defend them have nothing but sophistical arguments to blind the people with. The scripture and the apostles' church used none: as for Gregory the great, and Theodosius, with others that defend them, all the histories declare, that men of greater learning than they condemned them by the scripture; as Leo III., also the emperor Constantine V., who assembled all the learned men of Asia and Greece, and condemned the use of images, which Gregory and Martin the first had established. But it would have been of no force, had all Asia, Africa, and Europe, and Gabriel the archangel, descended from heaven, and approved the use of images. Forasmuch as the apostles neither taught nor wrote of them, their authority should have no place. The word of God solely and only is to be preferred (Gal. i.), which forbiddeth images.

CHAPTER VI.

THE THIRD OFFICE OF CHRIST CONCERNING HIS PRIESTHOOD, IS TO OFFER SACRIFICE UNTO GOD, AND BY THE SAME TO PURGE THE WORLD FROM SIN.

PAUL saith (Phil. ii.), that Christ humbled himself unto the death of the cross. (Heb. ii.) He was made partaker of a man's mortal nature, that by death he might destroy him that had the empire and dominion of death, that is to say, the devil. John calls him the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. (John i.) All the sacrifices of the old law were figures and types of this only sacrifice, which was appointed by God, to die and to suffer

the wrath and displeasure of God for the sin of man, as though he himself were a sinner, and had merited this displeasure. The greatness of this wrath, sorrow, confusion, ignominy, and contempt, neither angel nor man can express ; his pains were so intolerable, and his passion so dolorous, his Deity so obedient with the Father's will, that it was not only a sacrifice, but also a just recompense to satisfy for all the world solely and only, as Christ taught Nicodemus, John iii. as Paul, Heb. vii. viii. ix. x. Isa. liii. and so all the prophets and patriarchs. And such a sacrifice as once for all sufficeth, Heb. vii.

These two offices of Christ should never be out of remembrance. They declare the infinite mercy of God, and likewise his impartial and equal justice unto all creatures without respect of persons. The token of his mercy may be known in this, that he would not that all mankind should be lost, though in Adam all deserved eternal death. He opened his mercy unto Adam not only by word, but also by the fire that descended upon his sacrifices and his son's. So to Abraham. Then to the world by the incarnation and death of his only Son, and the promise of grace, and the promise of everlasting life unto such as repent and believe in him.

The sign of his wrath and displeasure unto man is this, that he would not accept man again into his favour for any penance, any sorrow, any trouble, any adversity, any weeping, any wailing, nor for the death of any person, until his own Son, most dearly beloved, by death appeased his displeasure, and became surety to satisfy the justice of God and the right that the devil had unto all mankind. This if man remembered as deeply and as earnestly as the matter requires, it should make his heart full sorry, and bring him unto an honest and virtuous manner of life. It would bring him to consider this example of God's justice and equity in the appeasing of his own justly conceived wrath, and likewise that he would do no wrong unto his mortal enemy the devil. Except the Son of God had been an equal and just redemption, a price correspondent to make amends and satisfy the faults and guilt of man's sin, God would not have taken one soul from the right and justice of the devil.

Now of this infallible truth, that Christ hath sacrificed only for sin, and that his death is accounted only sufficient

for the salvation of man, the church of Christ is aright instructed by two most necessary articles; first, of justification; and then of the right use of the sacrament of his holy body.

CHAPTER VII.

Of Justification.

Concerning justification thus the word of God teaches: St. Paul, when he saith that we are justified by faith, (Rom. iii. iv. v.) means that we have remission of sins, reconciliation, and acceptance into the favour of God. So doth this word, 'justify,' signify (Deut. xxv.), where God commandeth the judge to justify, quit, and absolve the innocent, and to condemn and punish the culpable person.

Paul saith, "We are justified by faith, and not by works."

To be justified by faith in Christ is as much as to say, we obtain remission of sin, and are accepted into the favour of God, by the merits of Christ.

To be justified by works is as much as to say, to deserve remission of sin by works.

Paul declares, that for the death and merits of Christ we are saved, and not by our own virtues. So that faith not only shows us Christ that died, and now sitteth at the right hand of God; but also applies the merits of this death unto us, and makes Christ ours. Faith lays nothing to gage* unto the justice of God but the death of Christ, and thereupon claims mercy and God's promise, the remission of sin, and desires God to justify and deliver the soul from the accusation of the law and right of the devil, which he is bound to do for his promise sake. (Ezek. xxxiii. Matt. xviii.) And although with this remission of sin he gives likewise the Holy Ghost to work the will of God, to love both God and his neighbour, yet notwithstanding, the conscience, burdened and charged with sin, first seeks remission thereof. For this thing the conscience labours and contends in all fears and terrors of sorrow and contrition. It disputes not what virtues it brings (wretched soul) to claim this promise of mercy; but forsaking its own justice, offers Christ, dead upon the cross, and sitting at God's right hand. It makes nothing

* Brings nothing as a pledge to satisfy.

to be the cause, wherefore this mercy should be given, saving only the death of Christ, which is the only tron,* the only sufficient price and gage for sin.

And although it is necessary and requisite, that in the justification of a sinner contrition be present, and that charity and virtuous life must necessarily follow; yet the scripture attributes the remission of sin only unto the mercy of God, which is given only for the merits of Christ, and received solely by faith. Paul does not exclude those virtues from being present, but he excludes the merits of those virtues, and derives the cause of our acceptance into the grace of God only for Christ.

And mark this manner of speech: "We are justified by faith;" that is, "we are just through the confidence of mercy." This word, faith, comprehends as well a persuasion and confidence, that the promise of God appertains unto us for Christ's sake, as the knowledge of God. For faith, though it desires the company of contrition and sorrow for sin, yet it contends not in judgment upon the merits of any works, but only for the merits of Christ's death. In case it did, it avails nothing; for if a man desire to be delivered from the law, the law must be satisfied, which saith, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and all thy heart, and all thy strength." (Deut. vi.) Now there is not, nor ever was, any man born of the stock of Adam in original sin, that feared God, as much as the law requires, nor ever had such constant faith as is required, or such ardent love as it requires: seeing those virtues that the law required are infirm and weak, for their merits we can obtain nothing of God. We must therefore only trust to the merits of Christ, which satisfied the extreme jot and uttermost point of the law for us. And he imputes and communicates this his justice and perfection to us by faith.

Such as say that faith alone justifies not, because other virtues are present, cannot tell what they say. Every man that will have his conscience appeased, must mark these two things: how remission of sin is obtained, and wherefore it is obtained. Faith is the mean whereby it is obtained, and the cause wherefore it is received, is, the merits of Christ. Although faith be the means whereby it is received, yet neither faith, nor charity, nor contrition, nor the word of God, nor all these knit together, have sufficient merits wherefore we should obtain this remission

* A tron was a public beam for weighing merchandize.

of sin. But the only cause wherefore sin is forgiven, is the death of Christ.

Now mark the words of Paul: "Freely," saith he, "we are justified by his grace." Let the man burst his heart with contrition, believe that God is good a thousand times, and burn in charity; yet all these shall not satisfy the law, nor deliver man from the wrath of God, until such time as faith lets fall all hope and confidence in the merits of such virtues as are in man, and says, "Lord, behold thy unfruitful servant—only for the merits of Christ's blood give me remission of sins; for I know no man can be justified otherwise before thee, as David saith, "No man living shall be justified in thy sight." (Psa. cxliii.) And again, "Blessed is the man, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin." (Psa. xxxii.)

He that would mark Christ's communication with that nobleman and great clerk Nicodemus (John iii.) would be satisfied how and wherefore man is justified, so plainly, that no adversary of the truth should hurt this infallible verity, "Sole faith to justify."* Nicodemus, having a good opinion, although not a sufficient knowledge of Christ, came unto him by night, and confessed him to be sent from God, and that because of such works and miracles as he had wrought. Christ made answer, "Truly, Nicodemus, I say unto thee, no man can see the kingdom of God, except he be born from above." Nicodemus, not understanding what Christ meant, asked him how an old man could be born again, and whether he could enter his mother's womb, and then be born again. Christ brings him yet nearer unto the light, that he might know the means, and saith, "I tell thee truly, Nicodemus, that no man can enter the kingdom of God, except he be born of water and the Holy Ghost," &c.

Nicodemus confessed yet again his ignorance, and desired to be further instructed, saying, "How may these things be?" Christ answered, "Art thou a great master and rabbi in Israel, and yet ignorant of these things?" Meaning, that great and horrible must the ignorance of the people be, when their doctors know not the truth. Nicodemus confessing his ignorance, and receiving reproach at Christ's hand, because he took upon him to teach others, and yet was a fool himself in the religion of God, might for shame have left Christ and his gospel-yoke,

* Faith alone justifies.

because he now was made only a scholar, who before for his prudence and learning was the chief of the Jews, a pharisee of most notable estimation. But Christ straightway comforts him and all others, learned and unlearned, and saith, "No man ascendeth into heaven, except He that descended from heaven, the Son of man, which is in heaven." As though Christ had said thus: "Discomfort not thyself, Nicodemus, that although thou art a great learned man, yet thou art ignorant of the way unto everlasting life. For I promise thee, there is no man, learned or unlearned, that can of his own wit and learning ascend unto the knowledge of life everlasting, but only He that descended from heaven, the Son of man, which is in heaven."

Now Nicodemus, being destitute of all worldly and human prudence, and finding himself full unable by wit* or learning to follow the effect of Christ's preaching concerning the means of salvation, depended only on the mouth of Christ, and disputed no more the matter. Then Christ showed him the way, and made a ladder for Nicodemus, wherewith he might ascend into heaven, and said, "This way thou mayest understand the thing I speak of. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up." This history of the serpent was not unknown unto this learned man, albeit he considered not the mystery and sacrament that it figured. Now Christ teaches him in this place to understand the law; and because this oration of Christ written by St. John is obscure, and lacketh a declaration somewhat of the purpose that Christ would prove, and omits the other part of the comparison, after the manner of the Hebrews, I will annex the type and figure, with the effect and mystery of the figure, and make the text plain.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up." Moses was commanded to lift up this serpent in the wilderness for this cause, that whosoever was stung or venomed with the poison of the serpents, if he looked on the serpent of brass, he might be healed. Here is the cause and effect declared, why the serpent was lifted up. Now to the words of Christ. "It so behoved the Son of man to be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is Nicodemus taught the way to

everlasting life; and because he was a doctor of Moses' law, Christ by the law made open the matter unto him, and brought him from the shadow unto the true body, and from the letter, unto the understanding of the letter: saying, "As those that by faith beheld the serpent were healed of the stings of the serpent, so such as behold me in faith hanging upon the cross, shall be healed from that sickness and sin, which the devil by the serpent infected mankind withal."

Now let us repeat the text of Moses again, that we may truly understand our Saviour's words: "Make thee a fiery serpent, and put it upon a pole, and raise it on high; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked upon it he did live." (Numb. xxi.)

In these words are declared three things:

First, why the serpent was set up: the cause—the people were stung by serpents.

Second, the effect—the health of the people.

Third, the use—that they should look upon him.

So John declares why Christ was made man, the use and the effect of his humanity,* in these words: "So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The cause of his coming was the sin and sickness of man, bitten by the serpent in paradise. The effect of his coming was the healing of this sickness. The use of his coming was to believe that his death upon the cross was, and is, sufficient for the remission of sin, and to obtain eternal life.

Here is the justification of man livelily expressed, and how many things concur as necessary unto the remission of sin; and yet man is only justified by faith. There was the word of God, the preacher of the word Christ himself, the contrition of Nicodemus, the Holy Ghost that moved Nicodemus to come by night unto Christ, the consenting will of Nicodemus unto the words of Christ. Yet only was he delivered from sin by the faith that he had in the death of Christ: as Christ saith, "So must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This must be diligently marked. For as the fathers of the old church used the serpent, so must those of our church use the precious body of Christ. They looked upon him only

* Human nature.

with the eyes of faith, they kissed him not, they cast no water upon him, and so washed their eyes therewithal. They touched him not with their hands, they ate him not corporeally, nor really, nor substantially; yet by their belief they obtained health.

So Christ himself teaches us the use of his precious body: to believe and look upon the merits of his passion suffered upon the cross, and so to use his precious body against the sting of original and actual sin: not to eat his body transformed into the form of bread, or in the bread, with the bread, under the bread, behind the bread, or before the bread, corporeally or bodily, substantially or really, invisibly, or any such ways, as many men, to the great injury of Christ's body, do teach.

But as the children of Israel only by faith did eat the body spiritually not yet born, so by faith do the christians eat him now, being ascended into heaven, and no otherwise; as Christ saith unto Nicodemus, "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." Grant that we could as well eat his carnal body as we eat other meat, yet the eating thereof would nothing avail. And if the apostles had corporeally eaten him in his last supper, it had profited nothing; for he took not his body of the holy virgin to that use, to be eaten for the remission of sin, or to sanctify him that eats him, but to die for sin, and in that way to sanctify his church. As he saith himself, that only by his death the fruit of his incarnation should be dispersed into the world. But of this I will speak farther in the chapter that follows.

This example of Nicodemus declares, that neither the works that go before justification, neither those that follow justification, deserve remission of sin. Though sole faith excludes not other virtues from being present at the conversion of every sinner, yet sole, and only faith, excludes the merits of other virtues, and obtains solely remission of sin for Christ's sake, herself alone; as Paul saith (Ephes. ii.), "By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any one should boast." Where he plainly excludes the dignity of works, and affirms us to be reconciled by faith. So does John (chap. i.) attribute those two singular gifts unto Christ, grace and verity, saying, "The law is given by Moses, and grace and verity is wrought by Jesus Christ." Here "Grace" signifies free remission of sin for the merits of Christ. "Verity" is the true knowledge of God, and the

gifts of the Holy Ghost that follow the remission of sin. Therefore such as say they are not justified only by faith in the mercy of God through Christ, extenuate sin and God's wrath against sin too much, and likewise spoil Christ of his honour, who is the only sacrifice that taketh away the sin of the world.

They that will justify themselves any other way than by faith, doubt always whether their sins are forgiven or not; and by reason of this doubt they can never pray unto God aright. For he that doubteth whether God be his friend or not, prays but as a heathen, and saith his Paternoster without faith and godly motion of the heart. He that is persuaded by the gospel, though his own unworthiness frighten him from God, yet he beholds the Son of God, and believes that both he and his prayers are accepted in Christ: and thus accepted into grace, he will follow the life of a justified man, as Paul commands (Rom. viii. Col. iii.), and as all the scripture gives example. For it is no profit to say sole faith justifies, except godliness of life follow, as Paul saith, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." He that has obtained the remission of sin must diligently pray for the preservation of God's favour, as David gives example unto the whole church, saying, "Create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit." (Psalm li.)

This prayer contains a wonderful doctrine, necessary to be daily repeated with great attention and heed. First, he desires to have a heart pure and clean, judging aright of God, to fear his justice against sin, and to believe steadfastly his promised mercy unto the penitent; and that this light and knowledge be not taken from him by the devil or vanity of the world, as daily we see such as have the knowledge of God's word live more worldly than he that knows not what God is. Then he prays to have the help of God to govern all his counsels, and all the motions of his heart, that they may be agreeable unto the law of God, full of faith, fear, and charity, and that for sin he be no more cast out from the face and favour of God. He prayeth to have strength in adversity; and to rejoice under the cross of affliction; not to murmur or grudge at any trouble, but to obey willingly the pleasure of God; not to leave him or mistrust his mercy, for any punishment, but

to suffer what God pleases, as much as God pleases, and when God pleases.

These virtues man must practise and use, after he is justified, as well as to obtain remission of his sin, or else he is not justified at all: he is but a speaker of justification, and hath no justice* within him. As he makes Christ only his Saviour, so must he follow such as were of Christ's family; the patriarchs, prophets, and the apostles, in the life prescribed by Christ, as they did, or else they shall be no disciples of the prophets, who were the doers as well as the speakers of virtue, but rather the disciples of the poets, that only commended virtue and followed it not, as Ovid saith: "There is a god within us! we are warmed by his influences: he comes from the ethereal mansions." These holy words availed nothing!

Such as cannot understand the epistle of Paul to the Romans concerning justification, and what life is required of him that is justified, let him read diligently the first epistle of John, and then he shall right well perceive another life is required of the justified man than the gospellers lead now-a-days, who have words without deeds, who slander the gospel, and promote it not; as it is to be seen, the more pity! in such men and such counties as the truth hath been preached a long time in. For the receiving of it unworthily, the Lord will, doubtless, take from them his word, and leave them unto their own lusts. For this is certain and too true. But let the whole gospel be preached unto the world as it ought to be: penitence and a virtuous life with faith, as God preached the gospel unto Adam in paradise, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, saying, "Woe to the sinful generation." As John the Baptist, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As Christ did, "Repent, and believe the gospel;" (Mark i.) and then of an hundred that come to the gospel, there would not come one. When they hear of faith alone, and the mercy of God to justify, and that they may eat all meats at all times with thanksgiving, they embrace that gospel with all joy and willing heart. And what is he that would not receive this gospel? The flesh itself, were there no immortal soul in it, would receive this gospel, because it promises aid, help, and consolation, without works; and when it hears that it may as well eat a pasty of venison upon the Friday as a herring, who is he that

* Righteousness.

would not be such a gospeller? But now speak of the other part of the gospel, as Paul teaches to the Romans, (chap. viii.) "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;" and as he prescribes the life of a justified man in the same epistle. (chap. xii. xiii. xiv. xv. xvi.) As Christ. (Matt. x.) As Peter. (2 Peter.) He that is justified, let him study those canons to live by.

St. Paul wrote to a justified church of the Corinthians, and to such as had received the knowledge of the gospel, and saith, "If any that is called a brother, be a whoremonger or covetous, or a worshipper of idols, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one eat not." (1 Cor. v.) This part of the gospel is not so pleasant as the other; therefore men take the first liberty, and neglect the fruits that should follow the gospel, and think themselves to be rich in the gospel, as the church of the Laodiceans judged of themselves, (Rev. iii.) when they indeed are miserable, and wretched, poor, and naked of all godliness. Paul declares (Rom. viii.) what it is to be justified, and to be in Christ, to walk after the Spirit; he saith, "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk after the Spirit."

For a conclusion, justification is a free remission of sin, and acceptance into the favour of God, for Christ's merits: which remission of sin must be followed necessarily by amendment of life, or else we receive the grace of God in vain. (2 Cor. vi. Rom. viii. 2 Peter i.)

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Lord's Supper.

From this infallible truth, "Only the death of Christ is the sacrifice for the expiation of sin," may be necessarily taught the right and true use of the Lord's Supper, which men call the mass.

First, it is manifest that it is not a sacrifice for sin, as men teach, contrary unto the word of God, that saith, "Christ, by one sacrifice, made perfect all things;" (Heb. vii. viii. ix. x.) and, as John saith, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from sins:" and there remaineth no more after it, as Paul saith, "Where is remission of sins,

there is no more sacrifice for sin;" and, to take away all doubt that remission of sin cannot be obtained for the merits of the mass, Paul saith plainly, that without blood-shedding no sacrifice can merit remission of sin.

Although Christ now sitteth at the right hand of God and prayeth for his church, and likewise offers the prayers and complaints of us that believe, yet it is only for the merits of his death that we obtain the mercy of God's promise; in which he sustained such pain, that the remembrance thereof, and the greatness of God's wrath against sin, put his precious body and soul into such an agony and fear, that his passion of sorrow surmounted the passion of all men, that ever travailed or were burdened with the weight of God's insufferable wrath against man for sin; insomuch that he wept not only tears of blood, but pain forced them to descend so abundantly, that they trickled upon the ground. Sore troubled and overcome with sorrow was David (Psalm vi.) when he washed his bed with tears for sin, but it was joy and mirth, if his pains be compared to these dolors of Christ; they wanted no augmentation. This sacrifice was killed by a little and a little; from one place of judgment sent unto another; and always from the flames into the ardent coals. His death upon the cross so differed, that although he was very God, and the dearly beloved Son of the Father, his abjection was so contemptible and vile, that he cried out as a man most destitute of God's favour and love, and said, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" And until such time as he offered his most holy soul unto the Father, and his blessed side was pierced with the spear, his pains and sorrows increased. Lo! thus was the manner to offer Christ for sin! after this sort and cruel handling of Christ was the wrath of God appeased.

If they sacrifice Christ in the mass, let them hang him as tyrants again upon the cross, and thrust a spear into his blessed heart, that they may shed his blood; for without shedding of blood is no remission. The scripture condemneth this abuse of the Lord's Supper, which is the conculcation* of his precious blood.

As concerning the use of this sacrament and all other rites and ceremonies that are godly, they should be so kept and used in the church, as they were delivered unto us by the high Bishop, Christ, the author of all sacraments.

* Treading under foot.

For this is true, that he most godlily, most religiously, and most perfectly instituted and celebrated the Supper, and no otherwise than the evangelist records. The best manner and most godly way to celebrate this Supper, is to preach the death of Christ unto the church, and the redemption of man, as Christ did at his Supper, and there to have common prayers, as Christ prayed with his disciples; then to repeat the last words of the Supper, and with the same to break the bread, and distribute the wine to the whole church: then, giving thanks to God, depart in peace.

Those ceremonies that God instituted not, but which repugn* God's institution, are not necessary, but rather in any case ought to be left, because they abrogate the institution of Christ. It seems sufficient unto me, if the church do as Christ commanded it to do. St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Corinthians after the ascension of Christ at least eighteen years, and said he would deliver them nothing but that which he had received of the Lord, and wrote concerning the use of the Supper, as Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote.

This is, therefore, an ungodly disputation that the papists contend about, the change and alteration of the bread, and also a false and pernicious doctrine, that teaches the corporeal presence of Christ, both God and man, in the bread, for although Christ said of the bread, "This is my body," it is well known that he purposed to institute a sacrament, therefore he spoke of a sacrament sacramentally. To speak sacramentally is to give the name of the thing to the sign; and yet so, notwithstanding, that the nature and substance of the sign remains, and is not turned into the thing that it verifies. Further the verity of the scripture, and the verity of christian faith, will not suffer us to judge and believe that Christ's body, invisible or visible, is upon the earth. (Acts i. Luke xxiv. Mark xvi. Acts iii.)

If we likewise consider the other places of the scripture, (John vi. xvi. xvii.) we shall find that Christ would not, and meant not, to institute any corporeal presence of his body, but a remembrance of his body slain, resuscitated, ascended into heaven, and from thence to come unto judgment. True it is, that the body is eaten, and the blood drunken, but not corporeally. In faith and spirit it is

* Oppose.

eaten; and by that sacrament the promise of God is sealed and confirmed in us, the corporeal body remaining in heaven.

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, Christ, giving his church warning of this heresy to come by the preaching of false prophets, said, "They will say, 'Lo! here is Christ, lo! there is Christ!' believe them not; for as the lightning cometh from the east into the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be;" meaning by these words, that his body is not a fantastical nor invisible body, as those teach that say his corporeal body is corporeally given in the bread, with the bread, and under the bread invisible. Against this error I will set the word of God, and declare the truth thereby, that they have but an imagination or idea of Christ's body, and not the natural and corporeal body.

And the first reason is this: Christ bade his disciples that they should not believe him that should say, "Lo! here is Christ!" or, "There is Christ!" He spake of his body, doubtless, and human nature: for he commandeth us to believe that his Godhead is everywhere, as David saith; and as he saith, "My Father and I are one." Likewise he told them in plain words, (Matt. the last chapter) that he would be with them unto the end of the world. Christ having but two natures, one divine, and the other human, by these express words now declares himself to be present with the one and absent with the other. These things being marked, I put this matter in short to be judged of every humble and charitably-spirited man, who judges aright of the body of Christ; those that say he is not bodily in the sacrament; or those that say he is bodily and corporeally there. If he be there corporeally and bodily, as they say, why should I not believe these words, "Lo, here! lo, there!" and say, Christ lieth that said, "Believe them not that say, 'Lo! here is my body,' or 'There is my body?'" Christ having good experience of the devil's subtlety—that he would intoxicate the wit of man with more subtle reasons than the simple heart could eschew, prepared of his mercy a means to preserve the faith of the simple: and against the sophistical and crafty reason of the devil, God calleth man to the judgment of his senses, and saith, "Reason what they will of my body, and say it is here or there substantially, bodily, corporeally, believe them not. Trust to thine eyes;

for as the lightning sensibly cometh from the east into the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." How so? Turned into fire? No, not so, visibly and sensibly. God wist right well, when he called man from reason to the judgment of his senses, what doctors and doctrine should follow respecting his sensible body. One to change a cake into his body,* and another to teach, though the cake be not his body, yet is his body present corporeally, substantially, really, bodily; the same body that hanged upon the cross, and is given by hand, with the bread, under the bread, and in the bread, yet insensible.†

Grant that all their glosses and interpretations were true, as they are most false; and say, as they would have it, that the very true humanity, and Christ in the true shape and form of a man, as he is, with all qualities and quantities, except sin and mortality, are in the bread, under the bread, or with the bread, after the bread, or before the bread; and say that there is present, in the priest's hand, as great a body, and as natural a man, as the priest or minister is himself, even "the Word of God made man," so they would have it; yet they shall never deceive a godly christian with their glosses: for he will trust unto the simplicity of God's word that saith, "Believe them not, till they show my body unto the senses, like as the lightning."

The defenders of this doctrine, because they are not able to answer unto such as write and preach the truth, challenge and attribute unto themselves the only knowledge of truth, and say their adversaries are not learned, or cannot understand them. Grant there were none learned that defend this truth, as there are, have been, and ever, till the world's end, shall be, yet will the truth defend itself; and because no man should, in this matter, leave the truth, though many better learned than he judge fantastically of a true body, Christ would have his simple disciple to judge sensibly of his natural body, and let this sophistication pass; and saith his body shall be as sensible as the lightning in the air, and not invisible with a piece of bread: though that most religious sacrament ought to be most godly used for the mystery that it contains, and likewise the promise of grace that it confirms.

They say this place makes not against the presence of Christ's body in the sacrament, but against such as should

* Transubstantiation. † Consubstantiation.

preach, in the latter days, false doctrine against Christ's doctrine, and make another Christ. True it is, he speaks of such as should preach false doctrine; but what should be that false doctrine that could be overcome with these words, "Believe them not; for as the lightning cometh from the east unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." What heresy does any man read in the histories were vanquished by these words? Not that of Paul of Samosata, which was condemned in the council of Nice; not that of Nestorius, which denied two natures to be united in Christ; nor that of Eutyches, which said one nature was converted into the other; nor any of the heresies that the devil moved against the essence and divine majesty of God, as Marcion and the Manichees, who said there were two gods, and both eternal, the one good and the other evil, the one always repugnant to the other: neither yet the heresy of Valentinian, who said there were innumerable gods; but of this false doctrine Christ spake, and of such as would, after his corporeal ascension into heaven, yet preach in the latter days unto the people, that his body should be in the earth. And, therefore, he gave them these words, "Believe them not; for as the lightning cometh from the east unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be."

Christ spake of those that should deceive the people in the time between his ascension and coming to judgment. For in the end of the world there shall be no need to bid us beware, for all false preachers shall be damned when his glorious body shall appear. He that believes that the natural body of Christ can be here any way corporeally before that time, neglects the commandment of Christ, "Believe them not;" (Matt. xxiv.) and, likewise, he forgets his creed, "He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, thence he shall come," &c. And Luke saith plainly, that as visibly as he ascended, so shall he descend at the latter day, and not before, as he saith. (Acts iii.) Because they defend their opinion by the wrong interpretation of the words in the articles of our faith, I will answer to one or two objections that they make.

First, they say that this word "heaven," in the article of our faith, "he ascended into heaven," signifies no certain and determinate place, but, generally, all the world, heaven, earth, and hell, wheresoever God's power is manifested; and so say, that the right hand of God betokens

no place, but the whole power of God. As when I say, "He sitteth at the right hand of God," it is as much as to say, that he is in his humanity everywhere, as his divinity is.

Unto the first, this I answer, that heaven in no place of the scripture is so taken, though it signify sometimes all the celestial bodies above; heaven ethereal, and then it signifies the air, as: (Psa. cxlviii.) "Ye waters, that be above the heavens, praise the name of the Lord;" and sometimes it signifies only the upper place of creatures, as in the same Psalm, "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, praise him in the heights." Into these superior heavens Christ ascended, as the manner of his ascension declares. (Luke xxiv. Acts i.) He took his disciples with him into the mount of Olivet, and bade them there farewell. He departed bodily from them, as their eyes bore them record; and a cloud received his body, that it could no more be seen: yet, what became of this body after it passed their sight? That no question afterward should be, where this body was gone to, St. Luke saith, "He was taken into heaven." This mutation of place, to ascend from the earth, only his human nature suffered; concerning his godhead, it is everywhere, and can neither ascend nor descend.

Such as say that heaven and the right hand of God are in the articles of our faith taken for God's power and might, which is everywhere, they do wrong to the scripture, and unto the articles of our faith. They make a confusion of the scripture, and leave nothing certain. They darken the simple and plain verity thereof with intolerable sophisms. They make heaven hell, and hell heaven, turn upside down and pervert the order of God. If the heaven and God's right hand, whither our Saviour's body is ascended, be everywhere, and note no certain place, as these uncertain men teach, then I will believe no ascension. What needs it? seeing Christ's body is everywhere with his godhead. I will interpret this article of my creed thus: "Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father; the right hand of the Father is everywhere; therefore, Christ ascended to everywhere." See what erroneous doctrine follows their imaginations!

As concerning the right hand of God, it is taken sometimes for God himself and his omnipotent power. (Psa. cxviii.) "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The

right hand of the Lord hath exalted me." Thus his right hand, being taken for his power, it is everywhere. But it is not so taken, when we say Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, as Mark saith, chapter xvi. and as Stephen said, Acts vii. "I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God." But it signifies a certain place of joy, where the souls of the blessed saints rest. Thither hath God translated the body of Christ, to be in as much joy, as it was in contempt here in the earth, as Paul saith. (Phil. ii.) Sitting thus at the right hand of God, his body is as true man as it was upon the earth, and in length, breadth, and weight, as physical, mathematical, and natural a body, as it was when hanging upon the cross.

In the changing of mortal qualities the humanity of Christ is neither destroyed nor changed into his deity; but as truly as his godhead, concerning his essence, cannot be seen, so his body, wheresoever it be, is subject unto the judgment of the senses. And as he that makes a house first conceives a true form in his imagination, and yet this imagination or conceit of the mind is not materially the house; so, such as dream and imagine a certain fantasy, and reduce the form and figure of a true body into their imagination, such is not a true body, but a conceit or imagination of a body, as those men have who say Christ is in the bread and with the bread, yet it occupies no place, nor is sensible. This is a wonderful doctrine, to make that glorious body of Christ to be a true body, and yet it lacketh all the qualities and quantities of a body. If Christ could have such a dreaming body as they speak of, yet may I not believe it is in the sacrament corporeally, because Christ saith, "Believe it not."

And where they would better the matter with these words, that Christ in the time of his being upon the earth did many things above the nature of a body, and carried his body sometimes invisibly, and entered the house of the disciples, the gates being shut; they prove nothing, only they trouble the simple conscience, and establish such as are more addicted unto the writing of man than unto the writing of God, in their error. Peter walked upon the water, yet was very man nothing the less; so it pleased God to use his creatures to his glory. Christ's body was nothing changed, although sometimes, to avoid being stoned, he conveyed himself out of the way. Though his

disciples knew not how he entered, the doors being shut, it is possible enough that he opened the doors, and yet they perceived it not: men's eyes are obedient unto the Creator, that they may see one thing, and yet not another. The scripture so teaches. Those evil men that would have done villany unto the angels in Lot's house, (Gen. xix.) were made so blind, they could not find the next door to them; yet Lot's house still abode in one place. The same may you read, (2 Kings vi.) how God made the Assyrian host blind, so that Elisha led the whole army into the city of Samaria. Balaam saw to beat his ass, and yet could not see the angel whom the ass saw, till he was reprehended by the angel. (Numb. xxii.) Here may you see that those reasons prove not that Christ's body is in the sacrament, because sometimes he would not be seen of his enemies.

This is our belief, that Christ is very man, and like unto his brothers. (Heb. ii.) Therefore, wheresoever his body be, it must have the qualities and quantities of a true man. If his body be corporeally in the sacrament, and yet without all properties of a true body, this text is false, "He was found in fashion as a man;" likewise this, "He was like unto his brethren in all things." They grant that only the spirit of man eats the body of Christ in the sacrament; then either the spirit of man is turned into a corporeal substance, or else the body of Christ loses his corporeal substance, and is become a spirit. For it is not possible for the spirit of man to eat corporeally a corporeal body, no more than he that studies the scripture, and commends the contents of the Bible to his memory, corporeally eats the book; but by the help of God's Spirit and his own diligence he eats the effect, marrow, and doctrine of the Bible. And in case it were corporeally and substantially with paper and ink, in the bottom of the sea, yet the learned man may comfort himself, and teach the mariners in the ship the contents thereof, though the corporeal Bible be drowned. So in the sacrament the christian heart, that is instructed in the law of God, and knoweth the right use of the sacraments by the Holy Ghost, and a firm faith that he hath in the merits of Christ's body and soul, which is ascended corporeally into heaven, may in spirit receive the effect, marrow, sweetness, and advantage of Christ's precious body, though it never

descendeth corporeally. Thus do faith and the scripture compel the church to believe.

When they say it is in the sacrament, and yet moves not from the right hand of God, I believe not their saying, but require a proof thereof. Christ hath not so great a body to fill heaven and earth corporeally; he is like unto his brethren; he is perfect God and perfect man. They make him to be there, and yet to occupy no place, then it is no body; for a true body, physical and mathematical, as Christ's body is, cannot be, except it occupy a place. They say, I must believe, and say with the virgin, "Behold the Lord's handmaid," I may not seek to know the means how. Well, let them do as much to me in this matter as was done unto the virgin Mary, and I am content. She could not comprehend how Christ was made man in her womb; yet the effect and corporeal nativity of Christ ascertained both her reason and senses, that she had borne a true body. It shall suffice me if they make demonstration unto my senses, and warrant my reason, that they have present a corporeal body; how it cometh, and by what means, I leave that unto God. But until such time as they show me that glorious and perfect man's body of Christ, as it was shown unto the blessed virgin, their saying, "Believe, believe," shall not come into my belief; for Christ saith, "Believe it not."

Of Christ's words, (Mark xiii.) "The moment of the last time no man knoweth, neither the Son of God," inasmuch as he is man, I gather this argument. If it be denied to Christ concerning his manhood to know the last day, much more to be everywhere, or to be in divers places at one time, is denied to his humanity. For it is more impossible and wonderful to be everywhere, than to know many things. I know the geographer can conceive and comprehend all the world in his head, but to be in all places, where his thoughts and spirit are occupied, it is impossible.

Further, Christ's body has not lost its corporeal qualities, but wheresoever he is corporeally, there is he with all the qualities of a body, and not without qualities, as these dreamers imagine. I will not judge that my Saviour who died for the sin of the world has a body in heaven sensibly with all qualities of a true man, and in the sacrament to be without all qualities and quantities of a true body; but I

abhor and detest, with the scripture, this opinion as a heresy so little differing from Marcion's, that I can scarce put diversity.

As corporeally the corporeal and substantial body of all England is in the head of him who describes by map or chart the whole realm, in Italy or elsewhere; so corporeally is the body of Christ in the heart of the christian. The conceit, imagination, or form conceived of England is not the body, matter, nor substance itself of England; no more is the spiritual conceit of Christ's body the corporeal body itself. Though Avicene and Averroes* would prove such a conclusion, yet the faith of our religion will not suffer a fantastical imagination to be a true substance.

To say that Christ's very natural body is in the earth, and yet invisible, is to destroy the body and not to honour the body. Aristotle (5 *Metaphysicorum*, cap. xxii.) defines what 'invisible' is: invisible (saith he) is that which has no colour at all. To take this from Christ's body, that it is truly in the sacrament corporeally, and yet invisible, is to say, Christ hath lost all the colour, shape, and form of his humanity. But what should Aristotle do in this our faith? The scripture teaches what we should believe; he ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead, (Acts i. Mark xvi. Luke xxiv.) and he has left us a sacrament of his blessed body, which we are bound to use religiously and many times, in order to exercise and establish our faith; and he, being absent corporeally, communicates by faith in spirit that most precious body and the merits of the same; and would to God people would use it with more reverence and more awe, as the scripture teaches, with true amendment of life and firm faith.

I put out a book in September last past, dedicated to my lord of Winchester,† wherein I have declared all my faith concerning this blessed and holy sacrament; therefore, I will pass to the other office of Christ's priesthood.

* Avicenna, who is called the prince of Arabian philosophers and physicians, lived in the eleventh century. His works were highly popular, even in the European schools of philosophy. Averroes was also a celebrated Arabian philosopher, who by many was considered equal to Aristotle, and wrote commentaries upon his works. He lived in the twelfth century.

† Bishop Gardiner.

CHAPTER IX.

Of Christ's Office of Sanctifying those that believe in Him.

The fourth office of Christ is to consecrate and sanctify those that believe in him. He is not only holy himself, but makes others holy also; as he saith, (John xvii.) "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may also be sanctified by the truth."

This sanctification is none other than a true knowledge of God in Christ by the gospel, that teaches us how unclean we are by the sin of Adam, and how that we are cleansed by Christ; for whose sake the Father of heaven not only remits the sins wrought willingly against the word of God, but also the imperfection and natural concupiscence which remains in every man, as long as the nature of man is mortal. How the Father sanctifies his people the prayer of Christ showeth: (John xvii.) "Sanctify them by thy truth," sanctify them by thy word, cleanse their heart, teach them, hallow them, make them fit for thy kingdom. Wherewith? With thy word, which is everlasting verity.

The means to sanctify are the word of God, the Holy Ghost, and faith that receives the word of our redemption. So Peter says, (Acts xv.) "Our hearts are purified by faith." Here is the cause expressed whereby we accept our sanctification; by faith, saith St. Peter. St. Paul (1 Cor. vi.) shows for whose sake, and wherefore we are sanctified. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified through the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." We are sanctified for the merits of Jesus Christ, by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

This is to be always marked, that when Christ had prayed his Father to sanctify his church by his word and by his Holy Spirit, and desired him to preserve it from ill for his mercy's sake, he added the price—the merits, and just deserving of God's grace, and said, "I sanctify myself for them, to the end that they may be sanctified by the truth." He sanctified himself for the church, when he died for the detestable uncleanness and filthiness thereof, more offensive and filthy than ever was the abhorred and leprous body of Lazarus. (Luke xvi.) As though he had

said, "Forasmuch as I offer and submit myself unto the bitter and cruel pain of the cross for the church, thou must, most holy Father, sanctify them and accept them as sanctified: nourish them, love them, and defend them, for the price and satisfaction of my death."

What a consolation is this for every troubled conscience to understand! Although it be unworthy of remission of sin, considering the greatness thereof, yet for the prayer of Christ he shall not be a castaway, so that he believe, as Christ said. He prayed not only for his apostles, but also for as many as should believe his word till the world's end. As many as will be gospellers, as they love the gospel and their own salvation, let them not dally and play with it, as if God could be trifled with; but let them think upon the most vile and tyrannous death of him, who alone was able to cleanse us from sin, and from hence beware of sin. It suffices, as Paul saith, that "before we knew the truth, we lived wantonly." (1 Cor. vi.)

CHAPTER X.

By this Verity and Truth, that "the Gospel teaches we are only to be sanctified in the Blood of Christ," is confuted the blasphemous Pride of the Bishop of Rome.

The bishop of Rome names himself "the most holy father," and takes upon him to sanctify all other men of the earth; as God's vicar and lieutenant, to absolve from guilt and punishment, to pull out of hell and send to heaven with his pardons, masses, and other abominations; whereas Christ only and solely doth sanctify, as it appears in John xvii. Likewise, by the title that Pilate gave him, hanging upon the cross, with these words, "Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews." This title declareth him to be both Messiah, Saviour, and Nazar, the Protector and Sanctifier of his church, as Matthew saith, (chap. ii.) "He shall be called a Nazarene."

This office of Christ abrogates all other things that man's constitutions attribute any holiness unto, as bewitched water, candles, vows, or any such heathen superstition. For only Christ sanctifies, and all holiness we

must attribute unto him, as John said, (chap. i.) "Behold the Lamb of God, as to say destined and appointed by God to take away the sin of the world," and to sanctify his church.

Although baptism is a sacrament to be received and honourably used of all men, yet it sanctifies no man. And such as attribute the remission of sins unto the external sign, do offend. John (Matt. iii.) preached penitence in the desert and remission of sin in Christ. Such as confessed their faults he marked and declared them to be of Christ's church. So that external baptism was but an inauguration or external consecration of those that first believed and were cleansed of their sin, as he declares himself in the same place: "I," saith he, "baptize with water;" as though he said, "My baptism makes no man the better, inwardly it changes no man; but I call and preach to the outward ear, I exhort unto repentance. And such as say they do repent, and would change their old sinful life, I wash with water. He that inwardly cleanses is stronger than I. His grace alone purifies the soul. I baptize into repentance, that is to say, into a new life."

This new life comes not until such time as Christ is known and received. Now, to put on Christ, is to live a new life. Such as are baptized must remember that repentance and faith precede this external sign, and in Christ the purgation was inwardly obtained before the external sign was given. So that there are two kinds of baptism, and both necessary. The one interior, which is the cleansing of the heart, the drawing of the Father, the operation of the Holy Ghost: and this baptism is in man, when he believes and trusts that Christ is the only author of his salvation.

Thus the infants are examined concerning repentance and faith, before they are baptized with water; at the contemplation of the which faith God cleanses the soul. Then is the exterior sign added, not to cleanse the heart, but to confirm, manifest, and open unto the world, that this child is God's.

And, likewise, baptism with the repetition of the words is a true sacrament and sign, that the baptized creature should die from sin all his life, as Paul writes. (Rom. vi.) Likewise, no man should condemn or neglect this exterior sign, for the commandment's sake; though it have no power to cleanse from sin, yet it confirms the cleansing

of sin, and the act of itself pleases God, because the receivers thereof obey the will of his commandment.

Like, as the king's majesty that now is, immediately after the death of his father was the true and legitimate king of England, right heir unto the crown; and received his coronation, not to make himself thereby king, but to manifest that the kingdom appertained unto him before. He took the crown to confirm his right and title. Had all England said nay, and by force, contrary unto God's laws and man's laws with an exterior ceremony and pomp, crowned any other man, he would have been an adulterous and wrong king, with all his solemnities and coronation. Though this ceremony confirm and manifest a king in his kingdom, yet it makes not a king, but the laws of God and of the land that give by succession the right of the kingdom to the old king's first heir male in England and other realms. And the babe in the cradle has as good a right and claim, and is as true a king, in his cradle uncrowned, as his father was, though he reigned a crowned king forty years. And this right of the babe should be defended and manifested, not only by the ceremony of coronation, but with all obedience and true subjection.

So it is in the church of Christ: man is made the brother of Christ, and heir of eternal life, by God's sole mercy received by faith, before he receive any ceremony to confirm and manifest openly his right and title. He saith, he believeth in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and believeth (he saith) the remission of sin; he doth not only deny the devil, the world, and sin, but saith, he will forsake him for ever, and serve his master, the Lord of virtue, King of heaven and earth. Thus assured of God, and cleansed from sin in Christ, he hath the livery of God given unto him, baptism, which no christian should neglect, and yet not attribute his sanctification unto the external sign. As the king's majesty may not attribute his right unto the crown, but unto God and unto his father. God who has not only given him grace to be born into the world, but also to govern as a king in the world, whose right and title the crown confirms and shows the same unto all the world. Whereas, this right by God and natural succession precedes the coronation—the ceremony avails nothing. A traitor may receive the crown, and yet nothing the more be true king. So a hypocrite and infidel may receive the external sign of baptism, and yet

be no christian man any the more, as Simon Magus and others.

Sacraments must be used holily, and yet not to have the office of Christ added unto them. Solely it is his office to sanctify and purge from sin. I take nothing from the sacraments, but honour them, and extol them in all things, as they are worthy; howbeit, not too much. I call a sacrament, a ceremony instituted in the law of God to this end, that it should be a testimony of God's promise unto all such as believe, and a sign of God's good will and favour towards us. As Paul saith, that Abraham received a testimony, by which God testified that he was received into grace. (Rom. iv.) And as the promise of God, the remission of sin is received by faith, so must these sacraments, that are signs, tokens, and testimonies of the promise, be received in faith. Thus by Christ we are sanctified only, and as Peter saith, "The chosen people, a princely priesthood, a holy people, and peculiar nation, to declare the power of him that hath called us from the darkness of error and sin into his wonderful light." These words declare the manner how we are sanctified, and what our office is after we are sanctified; to preach the power of him that hath called us from the darkness of sin; as it is written, (Isa. xliii.) "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise;" and likewise in chapter lxvi. The prophets and apostles do use many times this word, "*annunciare*," for "*laudare*," and "*gratias agere*."* So Paul, (1 Cor. xi.) "Ye shall show the death of the Lord until he come;" that is, ye shall celebrate the death of Christ with all praises and giving of thanks.

Such as are sanctified by Christ must live an honest and holy life, or else their sanctification avails not. As God forsook the children of Israel for sin, so will he forsake us. They were elected to be his people with this condition, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." (Exod. xix.) He that favoured not the Israelites, but took cruel vengeance upon them, because they walked not in their vocation, will do, and doth daily, the same unto us. (Rom. xi.) Therefore one of these two we must needs do, that say we are justified and sanctified in Christ; either from the bottom of our hearts we must amend, or

* "Show forth," for "praise and give thanks."

else be eternally lost, with all our spiritual knowledge. For the axe is put to the root of the tree. So far has the malice of man proceeded, that the wrath of God can be no longer deferred. A great time has the gospel been known of many men, yet the life of the gospel is as new to seek as though it were but now begun.

Therefore, we see how God begins again to permit the darkness of error to overwhelm the world. Such blindness ever follows the contempt of God's word, and the unthankful receiving thereof. Therefore, as we are sanctified by Christ, so let us bear him and sanctify him in our breasts, or else we perish. (Rom. vi.) For faith intends and always makes haste unto this port, as Paul saith, (Tit. ii.) "that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly."

Men know not what the gospel is. They read it as they read "Sir Bevis of Southampton," or "The deeds of Robin Hood."* If they may know what the scripture saith, they judge it sufficient; whereas it is quite the contrary. Men should not only read the scripture to be wiser, but to be better. We bear the name of Christ, and confess him. We must, therefore, be those persons in whose life; the stamps of Christ must appear, or else we blaspheme our master, whose name we bear. (Rom. vi. xiii.) Because after baptism we should live a modest and temperate life, Christ departed into the desert, and fasted, making this answer unto the devil: "Man liveth not by bread alone." Man is not created to the foolish pleasures of the world, but to regard what the will of God requireth.

They deceive themselves that trust to faith, where honesty of life follows not. Faith is mistress in the soul of the christian, and entertains no such servants as are adulterers, thieves, slanderers, drunkards, covetous persons, swearers, ill and unoccupied raveners of the meat of the poor; but charity, peace, temperance, prayer, liberality, and avoiding all occasion of ill. (2 Pet. i. James ii. 1 Cor xii.)

* Two popular story books.

CHAPTER XI.

Of Christ as a King.

As the scripture teaches that Christ is the very true priest and bishop of the church, who prays for the church, satisfies the wrath of God for the sins of the church, and who alone sanctifies the church; so it proves Christ to be the King, Emperor, and Protector of the church, and that by the office and property of a king who defends his subjects, not only by his godly laws, but also by force and civil resistance, as the enemies of his commonwealth minister occasion. By these two means every commonwealth is preserved, as the scripture teaches everywhere.

Pharaoh, who desired that the church of God and commonwealth of the Israelites should be destroyed, was lost with all his army in the sea. The idolaters, that would make the commonwealth of Christ's church one with the commonwealth of Egypt, were destroyed.

Such as rebelled, as Korah and the Reubenites, against the governors of God's church, Moses and Aaron, were destroyed with the artillery of God's wrath. And to set his commonwealth in due order, God destroyed all the princes and nations that possessed the land of Canaan.

In the latter days, when the king of this commonwealth should be born, the angel declared unto the blessed virgin of what puissance and power this kingdom of Christ should be; "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i.) Although now the commonwealth of the church has no certain place appointed where it shall remain, as was appointed in the old law, yet we are certain that this kingdom of Christ remains upon the earth, and shall do so, till the earth is burned. (Matt. xvi. xxviii. 1 Cor. xv.) Howbeit, as Christ won and obtained this kingdom in the latter days without shield or spear, so doth he preserve it with his Holy Spirit, and not with carnal weapons. As Christ said unto Pilate, (John xviii.) "My kingdom is not of this world;" meaning, that he would not reign in this world, as a prince of this world, with pomp and pride; but defend his people with his Holy Spirit, so that neither the devil nor the world should break their patience, though many afflictions and sorrows should fight against them for

the truth's sake. Christ did not deny himself to be the King of the world before Pilate, but asserted, that he meant not to reign in a worldly manner, to the hinderance and defacing of the emperor's dignity and title, as the Jews falsely accused him. So Cyril (lib. xii. cap. x.) on John saith: and so is the mind of St. Augustin on the same place.

This kingdom is spiritual. Christ sitting at the right hand of God the Father prays for us, gives us remission of sin, and the Holy Ghost, to fight and overcome the world. He has left here in the church, his gospel as the only weapon to fight with for the time of this mortal life. See John xvii. where he defines life everlasting to be the knowledge of God. So does Paul (Rom. viii.) prove this kingdom to be spiritual; but concerning the body, it appears, that Christ defends not his people, because they live in such contempt and adversity; but hereafter it shall appear, as Paul saith (Col. iii.); and John, (1 John iii.) "Now we are sons of God, but it doth not yet appear, what we shall be."

This kingdom shall be ever persecuted till the world's end. (Psalm ii. lxxi. cxviii.) Isaiah the prophet described the church of this present life, saying, "The Lord shall give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction; yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner." (Is. xxx.) Thus the church shall remain, but always in affliction. I know such as favour not the truth, will misinterpret my words, that I condemn all princes and kings, as enemies of the gospel, because they peaceably enjoy their kingdoms. So I wish them always to do, with hearty prayer to the glory of God. But of this one thing I will assure every prince of the world: the more sincere he is in the cause of God, the more shall be his cross.

I would refer unto the king's majesty, that is dead, who at the first brunt, as soon as he took God's cause in hand, that leopard and dragon of Rome did not only solicit the whole foreign world against him, but also he suffered such an ungodly and detestable insurrection of his popish subjects, and such other crosses also, that never would have been moved, had he not disquieted the beast of her rest, that sat above his majesty, and above God also, in his own realm.

They are flatterers of princes that say every thing may be ruled with ease: they consider not what an enemy of

God's order the devil is,[a] that would not only have the gospel of truth oppressed, but also every prince who studies the preferment and setting forth of God's word. The devil never ceases to molest and disquiet every godly polity and commonwealth. Were there no scriptural divine to detect the art of the devil, Aristotle, in the fifth book of his Politics, sufficiently manifests the devil's enmity against all commonwealths.

Further, the nature of man is infirm, and very unable to sustain the office of any vocation, be it political, ecclesiastical, or domestic, without a singular aid of God. We see by Saul that noble man, who, in the beginning of his reign, did many noble acts, yet the devil got the victory in the end. His successor David was likewise so entangled in the devices of the devil, that without much pain he could not extricate himself from the wicked snare, which the devil once brought him into. Howbeit, God defended both him and his kingdom, so that not only the preachers, but also he himself, taught the word of God unto the people, as he had promised. (Psalm vi. xl.)

God preserves his ministers above human reason, as he did Jacob from the hands of Esau, David from Saul, Daniel from the lions, and Paul in the ship, where was no human hope of salvation at all, but only the protection of God. These examples declare, that he defends his people against all the world by his mighty power.

Likewise he governs his church with his own laws only, and would his subjects should know him, honour him, and obey him, as he hath commanded in his law. Paul expresses this law, (Rom. i.) "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And Mark says, "Preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi.) The only law, whereunto this congregation is bound, is the gospel, as Christ saith, (John xiv.) "The Holy Spirit shall teach you all things, and bring to your memory all things which I have said unto you." Here Christ binds the apostles and all the church unto the things he had taught them.

This commonwealth of the true church is known by these two marks; the pure preaching of the gospel, and the right use of the sacraments. Thus Paul proves, (Eph. ii.) that the church is bound unto the word of God: "Upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets are ye built." Likewise (Isa. lix.) "My Spirit that is upon

thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed for ever."

Of the right use of sacraments it is taught, 1 Cor. xi. Mark xvi. Luke xxiv. and Matt. xxviii. Those who teach people to know the church by these signs, the traditions of men, and the succession of bishops, teach wrong. Those two false opinions have given unto the succession of bishops power to interpret the scripture, and power to make such laws in the church as it pleased them. There is no man that has power to interpret the scripture. God, for the preservation of his church, gives unto certain persons the gift and knowledge to open the scripture: but that gift is not a power bound to any order, or succession of bishops, or title of dignity. The princes of the earth give always such power of civil justice by succession; as one is chief justice for the time of his office to do every thing appertaining unto the same; so his successor always has the like.

God has given the civil magistrates power and authority to make such laws for the commonwealth, as shall be agreeable with reason and not against God's law, and likewise power to interpret the same laws. But this is not to be admitted in the church, unto whom God hath given the gospel, and interpreted the same by his only Son, who taught the meaning and contents thereof himself.

To know God and his wrath against sin; the greatness of sin; the justice* given in Christ; the fear of God; the faith in his promises; the persecution of his members; the aid and help of God in adversity; the resurrection of the dead; where and what the true church is; the doctrine of everlasting life; of the two natures in Christ; of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: these are the contents of the law whereunto God has bound his church; and he has commanded her to hear his Son concerning the interpretation of these points. And at the commandment of Christ the apostles were sent to preach these verities in the Spirit of God. It is therefore necessary to retain in the church the doctrine given unto us by the apostles, and to be the disciples of their doctrine, and not to feign interpretations of our own heads contrary unto their doctrine.

Such, as will be the members of this church, must be

* Righteousness.

disciples of the gospel, and learn, in fear and humbleness of spirit, the articles of our religion, as they are taught there, and not stand unto the judgment of any man, whatsoever he be, though he say truth. For his truth is nothing, except the authority of God's word contain the said truth.

It is a great confirmation of our faith when we see such as were godly persons before us, interpret the scripture, and use the sacraments as we do. As when the heresy of Samosata troubled the christian brethren, by saying "the Word," in John, "In the beginning was the Word," did not signify any person or divine substance, they were confirmed by the testimony of Irenæus, who had heard Polycarp, John the evangelist's disciple, interpret "the Word," in the gospel, for the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity. Though we are bound to hear the church, that is, the true and faithful preachers of God's word, as Polycarp and Irenæus were in this case; notwithstanding, our faith is not grounded upon the authority of the church, but in and upon the voice of the gospel. We pray and invocate the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, because the scripture proves him to be God: "The Word was God;" also, "My Father worketh until now, and I also work;" "Without me ye can do nothing;" likewise, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

The adversaries of truth defend many a false error under the name of the holy church; therefore, these treasons and secret conspiracies must be taken heed of; and when the church is named, we ought diligently to consider, when the articles they would defend were accepted of the church, by whom, and who was the author of them; and not to leave till the matter is brought unto the first original and most perfect church of the apostles. If you find by their writings that their church used the thing which the preacher would prove, then accept it, or else not. Be not amazed, though they speak of ever so many years, or name ever so many doctors. Christ and his apostles are grandfathers in age to their doctors and masters in learning. Repose thyself only on the church which they have taught thee by the scripture. Fear neither the ordinary power or succession of bishops, nor that of the greater part. For if either the authority of bishops, or the greater part, should have power to interpret the scripture, the sentence of the pharisees should have been preferred before the

sentence of Zacharias, Simeon, Elizabeth, or the blessed virgin.

Consider, that many times the true church is but a small congregation, as Isaiah saith: "Except God had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom." Therefore the interpretation of the Scripture is not obligated* unto an ordinary power, or to the greatest number, as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, and Christ's time testify.

Beware of deceit, when you hear the name of 'the church.' The verity is then assaulted; for they call the church of the devil, the holy church many times. As Korah and the rest of the people said unto Moses many times, "Why have ye deceived the people of God, and brought them out of Egypt?" They were the church of God nothing the more, though it was painted with this holy title; but the church of the devil and a congregation of rebellious and seditious persons, as God declared both by word and deed. Moses called them not the church of God, but the church of Korah; not the people of God, but rebels and God's enemies, as God declared them to be by his severely punishing them. So, many times, if the most part had been preferred, then the truth had been confounded, and Moses and Aaron put to death.

Remember, christian reader, that the gift of interpretation of the scripture is the light of the Holy Ghost given unto the humble and penitent person that seeks it only to honour God with; and not unto that person who claims it by title or place, because he is a bishop, or followed by succession Peter or Paul. Examine their laws by the scripture, and then shalt thou perceive, that they are the enemies of Christ's church and the very church of Korah. Remember, therefore, to examine all kinds of doctrine by the word of God. For even such as preach it aright have their infirmities and ignorance: they may depart from the truth, or else build some superstition and false doctrine upon the gospel of Christ. Superstition is to be avoided, and false doctrine to be abhorred, whosoever is the author thereof, prince, magistrate, or bishop: and the apostles made answer, (Acts v.) "We must obey God, rather than men."

The superior powers have authority, and may make what laws they list for the wealth and preservation of their subjects, so they repugn not the law of nature, nor the

* Limited, restrained.

law of God. But, as touching the church of Christ which governs the soul of man, only the law of God must be obeyed; the ceremonies ordained for good order to be observed in the church should not be neglected, as the assemblies of people on the Sabbath-day, and other feasts wherein the word of God is preached, and the sacraments rightly administered. But those ceremonies, that partly superstition, partly avarice, partly tyranny, have brought into the church, are to be eschewed; as the saying of private masses, blessing of water, holy bread, bell or candle, with such-like. As for the praying unto dead saints, or to have their images in the church, it is not a mere ceremonial matter, but very plain and manifest idolatry, contrary to the express word of God, who forbids to make any image. And he that prays unto God in the name of any dead saint is a heathen, and knows not God; for he follows his own imagination, and not the word of God, which teaches and commands that we should both know and pray unto him in his Son's name. (John xiv.) The neglect of this commandment deserves eternal pains.

Such as have a knowledge of Christ, from henceforth let them give him his right honour, and leave this idolatry and superstition, considering that with great pain he has won the church out of the hands of the devil, defends it with his Holy Spirit, and governs it with the laws of his only word. And consider, whether these injuries, blasphemies, troubles, unquietness, and destruction of God's people by the laws of the bishops are to be permitted, though they cry till they be hoarse again, "The holy church, the holy church!" Were the like trouble in any realm among the king's subjects, by the occasion and abuse of the king's majesty's laws, (doubtless they could not show under the king's seal their law to be of authority;) they should, as is right, soon be put to silence, and their adulterous laws and sophistical glosses removed out of the way. This I know, that Christ knew best all the histories of the old law, was himself, when present, the teacher of all truth, and most wise to provide for the church such laws as should preserve it in his absence.

Now that we know what Christ and his office is in the church of God, it is likewise necessary for every man that is a member of this church to know what man is, and his office towards Christ. For as God has bound himself by his promise to be our God and helper for Christ, so hath

he bound man by his commandment to be his servant, and in his word to follow Christ, and in Christ God, for the commandment's sake; until such time as the end wherefore man was made, be obtained; which is eternal felicity, and man restored and made like unto the image of God, as he was at the beginning, full of justice, obedience, and love towards his Creator and Maker.

Studying brevity, and to be short, I will not write particularly of every member and the office thereof, wherewith all the whole mass and substance of man is framed. That I refer unto the learned physicians who write diligently of the parts of man, and unto Lactantius. Neither what man was, at the beginning, before he sinned; full of godly knowledge, always lauding the goodness of his Creator, always obedient unto his will, always following the order of reason, without any ill and contrary concupiscence or other carnal resistance. To be short, man's nature had been in all things like unto the law, and as perfect as the law of the decalogue, or ten commandments, had not he sinned: but what man is now, after his transgression, the christian reader shall be advertised.

CHAPTER XII.

Of what Man is.

Man, fallen from his first dignity and original perfection, is now the creature that fighteth with the law of God; is full of darkness, ignorance, and the contempt of God; without obedience, fear, and love of God; oppressed and subject unto all calamities, and wilful concupiscence, both of body and soul.

Man is the enemy of God, (Rom. viii.) the image of the devil, the library of lies, the friend of the devil, right heir of eternal death, and the child of damnation. (Eph. ii.) We are murderers by the means of sin, not only of ourselves, but also of the Son of God, who never sinned. And yet, not understanding this our woeful case and condition, we neglect both God and his law, and feel not our infirmities and sickness—the more is our health to be despaired of!

He that labours under a dangerous disease, and yet

feels not the grief thereof, will never find the remedy, nor have the ill removed. We see this to be true by natural reason. Of all diseases frenzy is the most dangerous, yet the patient feels it not, nor can show where or how this woeful and miserable disease molests him ; therefore very seldom or never are such persons cured and made whole. Seeing the next way unto health is the knowledge of the disease, and man is in himself sick and infected with more diseases a thousand fold than I have rehearsed, it is not without cause that I say, that to know what man is, is very necessary ; although it seem not so unto such as are drunk with the pleasures of the world, and never think from the bottom of their heart to return unto repentance. If the scripture of God and the writings of learned men cannot persuade them what the wrath of God is against sin, I know well my labours will little avail. Yet every disciple of Christ is bound to seek the glory of God and salvation of his neighbour, and to commit the success unto God.

It is very difficult and hard for man to know himself; the only way thereunto is to examine and open himself before God by the light of the scripture: and he, that beholds himself well in that mirror and glass, will find such a deformity and disgraced physiognomy, that he will abhor his own proportion so horribly disfigured. Let man seek no further than the first commandment, (Exod. xx. Deut. vi.) "Thou shalt love thy Lord God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy power, and thy neighbour as thyself," then shall man perceive his wretchedness; how that many times he loves nothing less than God or his neighbour ; and perceive that he is the friend of the devil and of the world, and a contemner of God.

This way St. James teaches man to know himself: "Whoso looketh in the law of liberty," &c. St. James uses this word, "law," which in the Hebrew phrase signifies a doctrine that teaches, instructs, and leads a man as well unto the knowledge of himself as of God.

So St. Paul disputes by admirable enallages* and prosopopœias,† in the seventh chapter of Romans. "By the law cometh the knowledge of sin ;" he calls the law the power and force of sin. (1 Cor. xv.) Only the law declares

* A figure in grammar, whereby some change is made of the common modes of speech.

† A figure, by which things are made persons.

how great an ill sin is; and the man that beholds the will of God in the law, will find himself and all his life guilty of eternal death. Read the seventh chapter to the Romans with judgment, and then know what man is, how miserably spoiled of virtue and oppressed with sin. So Paul learned to know himself; and knew not what sin was, till the law had made him afraid, and showed him that he, being a pharisee, was, with all his holiness, condemned. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." (Rom. vii.) And in the same chapter he shows plainly what he saw in the glass and contemplation of the law, that sin was manifested thereby, and the greatness thereof known. "But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Mark the travice* and play between the law of God and the conscience of Paul, and see how he gives thanks unto his master the law, and proclaims it to be a spiritual and holy thing, as a light or torch, to show man his filthy and stinking nature; saying, "The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin;" a bondman of sin and traitor to God.

Here thou seest, good reader, what a miserable wretch man is; and how man may know his misery by the law. Howbeit, though we read it many times, we are neither the wiser, nor the better. We are not taught much by this mistress the law; she cannot make us good scholars. We dally and play so with the world, we live in such security and ease, that, say she what she list, we turn the deaf ear and will not hear.

Therefore, to make man know himself, God sendeth another mistress to school him, namely, adversity: then we begin to understand the law of God, that dissuades from sin, and we then know our misery. As David cries, that he is not able to bear the burden of sin, if the Lord execute justice, as the greatness thereof merits: "If thou, Lord, shouldest be extreme to mark what we have done amiss, who may abide it?" (Ps. cxxx.) David, when he felt the pains of his adultery, the death of his child, the conspiracy of Absalom, the vitiating of his wives, exile and banishment, and such other calamities; in this school of misery learned this verse, "Who can sustain the wrath

* Opposition, as in fencing.

of God?" Now, though these temporal pains be more than man can support, they are but sport and dalliance in respect of the eternal pains. Howbeit, man may learn by them how much God is displeased with sin, and know himself to be, as he is, a vile piece of earth with all his pride and pomp, and a rebel unto his Maker, as no creature else is, saving the devil and he.

This inward and secret ill, rebellion of the heart, blindness of the intention, and frowardness of will, is daily augmented by the malice of the devil, and our own negligence, that regards not what the law teaches that God requires of man. Because the gospel teaches, that we are only saved by the mercy of God for the merits of Christ, our gospellers have set all at liberty, and care not at all about such a life as should and ought to follow every justified man and disciple of Christ. It is no marvel, for there is no discipline and punishment for sin; and wheresoever the gospel is preached and this correction not used, as well against the highest as the lowest, there shall never be a godly church.

As a king's army, though their hearts are ever so good, cannot resist the force of his enemies without weapons and artillery necessary for men of war; no more can the king's majesty, the magistrates, and preachers, preserve the church against the devil and sin, without the excommunication of such as openly offend the divine majesty of God and his word. For, by this means, the sinner is taught by the scripture to know himself: (1 Cor. v.) "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." God would not only the faithful, but also that the unbelievers should be kept in order by the discipline of the law, as Paul saith, "The law is given for the unrighteous;" likewise Deut. xix, "Thou shalt put the evil away from among you. And these which remain shall hear, and fear; thine eye shall not pity him."

This political and civil use of the law teaches man to know his faults: and this discipline of the law, exterior and civil, is necessary for man for divers causes: first, to declare our obedience unto God; then, to avoid the punishment that always God, or else the magistrate, punishes the transgression with; thirdly, because of public

peace in every commonwealth, that one man should not do injuries to another, either in body or in goods.

There is yet another cause why this discipline of the law is necessary, which few men regard. Paul saith, that it is a schoolmistress unto Christ; because such as leave not off to sin, and to do the thing which is contrary unto the express word of God, to those Christ is not profitable. This use teaches Paul: (1 Cor. vi.) "Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, &c. shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And so saith John, "Whosoever sinneth is of the devil." He that knows himself must refrain from doing of ill; hear the gospel, and learn the gospel, that the Spirit of God may be efficacious in him: which cannot be as long as he hath a purpose to continue doing of ill. Ezekiel speaks of this civil and politic use of the law; and likewise of the second use thereof, which is, as I said before, to show man his sin, to accuse man before God, to alarm him, and to condemn man plainly: (chap. xxxiii.) "I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live." These words declare that as God would not the death of a sinner, so he requires the sinner to cease from doing of ill, and to be converted unto virtue.

As for the second use of the law, which is to declare what sin is, I showed before that it manifests the greatness and vileness thereof; as Paul writes, it condemns sin, and delivers not from sin. "By the law (saith he) is the knowledge of sin. The law worketh wrath; through the law sin is made exceedingly sinful." (Rom. vii.) "The sting of death is sin: but the strength of sin is the law." (1 Cor. xv.) In men that are addicted unto the pleasures of this world, the law has not this use, say the preacher what he list. Let the word of God threaten eternal death for sin, it avails not. He thinks that God is asleep, and will, at last, be satisfied with some trifle as an offering for sin. We shall find the contrary to our great pain, as others have before our time, that would not believe the word till they felt the vengeance and punishment of God, as Cain, the world drowned with the flood, the burning of Sodom and others. It is a great and horrible offence to hide or extenuate the judgments of God against sin, and the voice of the law that condemns the same. God willeth his pleasure to be known openly: (Jer. i.) "Lo! I have put my words in thy mouth:

behold I have set thee over nations, that thou mayest root out and destroy."

This use and office of the law none feel nor perceive so well as such as are God's friends, Adam, Abraham, Jacob, David, Hezekiah, &c. David said that the fear of God's displeasure and wrath was no less pain unto him than though a fierce lion had rent and dismembered his body in pieces, " as a lion hath broken all my bones." (Ps. xxii.) So saith Paul, " O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" He before said, " Once I lived without the law," that is, " I was secure, not feeling the wrath of God ;" but now, being converted from a pharisee to be an apostle, and brought to a knowledge of himself, he confesses his imbecility and faults, and says, " I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." Yet Paul confesses, that the law makes us not afraid to be damned because we cannot satisfy it, but that we should come to Christ with these comfortable words : " He hath concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all :" a great consolation for every troubled conscience !

Thus man may know himself to be, as he is, a very wretched and damnable creature, were it not for the virtue of Christ's death.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Office (or Duty) of a justified Man.

What the office of a justified man is Paul declares, (Tit. ii.) " The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and fleshly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." By these words Paul forbids all impiety and dishonest life, and shows man that is justified, what he should do : not to live after the concupiscence of the flesh, but soberly: not unjustly and doing wrong unto others, but rather to profit and do well unto all men. It suffices not man justly to keep his goods ; but he is bound justly to dispense his goods unto others, whether they are of the body or of the mind, religiously and not superstitiously. A notable word " godly,"

as the word of God teaches, and not as man's laws, contrary unto God's law, teach. "Waiting for the blessed hope," &c., he stirs up men to live well, and takes his reason from the profit and advantage that follows a godly life, which is immortal life at the coming of Christ to judgment.

Likewise he proves it with another argument: "The Son of God gave neither gold nor silver for our purgation, but his own body and precious blood." It is, therefore, an unworthy thing, and not becoming a christian man, who, by faith, hath received this cleansing, to live a vicious and ungodly life. But we should be a holy people and followers of good works. It is not sufficient to work well, except the justified man with a godly zeal and ardent desire follow this good work begun. Therefore Paul saith, "It is a good thing to be zealously affected in a good thing," and not only a performer of good works. Whereby we know, that although we are delivered from the malediction, curse, and damnation of the law, so that we retain a true faith, and with confidence in Christ repugn sin and overcome the terrors thereof; yet are we bound to the obedience of the law, which is God's will to keep us from living ill. And the more the justified man beholds the law, the more the knowledge of sin increases—the more he beholds the mercy of God in Christ, the more is his faith increased.

The law is also necessary for the justified man, to teach him with what works he should exercise his faith and obedience unto God. We may not choose works of our own wisdom to serve him withal; but he would have us to be governed by his word, as David saith, "Thy word is a light to my feet." Also, "In vain they worship me, following the traditions of men." The wisdom of man, not governed by the word of God, soon errs; it is carried for the most part, with affections, and chooses the works that are contrary to the law of God: therefore, this is true, that the ordinance of God still remains immutable in the justified man, that he must obey the law and serve in his vocation according to the scripture; that the exterior facts may bear testimony to the inward reconciliation.

The scripture is more diligent and more ample in teaching the christian justified man obedience unto God and a virtuous life, than it is to show us our salvation in Christ; and that it is for this purpose only—that we should not by

our licentious liberty, receive the grace of God in vain. It is more easy for man to know the gospel, than to follow the life of the gospel. Another may preach Christ, but the hearer must follow Christ. The science of the scripture is practical and not speculative; it requires a doer, and not a speaker only.

There are many who dissemble faith, and have a certain show of religion, when indeed, in their inward man, there is no faith at all. Let every man, therefore, search his own conscience, with what faith he is endued, and remember that Christ said, "It is a strait way and narrow that leadeth to life, (Matt. vii.) and but few that walk therein." Therefore our only remedy is, to pray for grace and amend.

Printed in Zurich by Augustine Fries.
A. D. 1547.

AN

OVERSIGHT AND DELIBERATION

UPON

THE HOLY PROPHET JONAH;

MADE AND UTTERED BEFORE THE KING'S MAJESTY, AND HIS MOST HONOURABLE COUNCIL,

BY JOHN HOOPER,

IN LENT LAST PAST:

COMPREHENDED IN SEVEN SERMONS.

A.D. 1550.

Except ye repent, ye shall all perish. Luke xiii.

THE EPISTLE.

To the most puissant prince and our most redoubted sovereign lord, Edward the Sixth, by the grace of God, king of England, France and Ireland, defender of the Faith, and in earth next and immediately under God, of the churches of England and Ireland, the supreme head. And also unto the most wise, godly, and most honourable lords of his highness' privy council; his most humble, loving, and obedient subject John Hooper, elect and sworn bishop of Gloucester, wishes all grace and peace from God, with a long, and most godly and prosperous reign over us, in all honour, health, and perpetual felicity.

Among all other most noble and famous deeds of kings and princes, none is more godly, commendable, and profitable to the commonwealth, than to promote and set forth unto their subjects the pure and sincere religion of the eternal God, King of all kings, and Lord of all lords. Then shall justice, peace, and concord reign, the door of idolatry be shut up, by which all evil has entered, and kings and kingdoms have fallen into jeopardy, as the writings of the prophets do testify. But the more this noble deed is glorious, godly and princely, the more difficult and hard it is; for the devil, the enemy of God and of all mankind, is wont to deceive the princes of the world, so that either they utterly neglect the religion of the true God, as a thing foolish and of no estimation, or to provoke them cruelly to persecute it. If he can bring neither the one, nor the other of these to pass; he will do the best he can to preserve a mixed and mingled religion, that shall neither plainly be against, nor wholly with him; and so use the matter that partly God's truth shall take place, and partly the superstitious inventions of man. The which mingled and mixed religion is so much the more dangerous as it is accounted for pure and good; therefore it is earnestly forbidden by God, as the examples of the scripture declare. Jehu the king of the Israelites when he had removed all gross and open idolatry; and

with the sword had taken away all the idolatrous priests, 2 Kings x., is reproved of God nevertheless, because he walked not in the law of God with all his heart, and left not the ways of Jeroboam. And against these minglers and patchers of religion, Elijah the prophet speaks, 1 Kings xviii. "How long will ye halt on both sides. If the Lord be God follow him, if Baal, go ye after him." Even so we may justly say: If the priesthood and ministry of Christ with his notes and marks are true, holy, and absolutely perfect, receive it—in case it be not, follow the pope. Christ cannot abide to have the leaven of the pharisees mingled with his sweet flour. He would have us either hot or cold; the lukewarm he vomiteth up, and not without a cause.

For he accuses God of ignorance and foolishness, who intends to adorn his doctrine and decrees with human cogitations. What king or prince of the world would suffer his statutes, laws and testament to be cut off and set on, at every man's liberty and pleasure? Should not the same glory, honour and majesty be given to the laws and testament of Christ which is sealed with his precious blood? The word of God, wherewith he governs and rules his church is a sceptre of iron, (Psal. ii.) and not a rod of willow, to be bowed with every man's finger, or a reed to be broken at man's will; no, nor yet a piece of leather to be stretched and reached out with any man's teeth.

These things are spoken by me, most gracious and virtuous king, to commend your majesty's, and your most honourable council's doings, who seek the glory of God and the restitution of his holy and apostolical church. The which, as your highness, and your most honourable and wise council, have graciously begun, may God's mercy, in the bowels of Christ Jesus, grant you most graciously to perform. The people of England were oppressed with the violence and cruel tyranny of antichrist; darkness and ignorance occupied the minds of most men, so that few knew the true way to eternal salvation. And yet many princes and wise men delight and tarry in this darkness, and cannot or will not, bear or suffer the radiant and shining beams of the gospel, more than the night crow can the beams of the sun; but the merciful Father of heaven shall better their sight when his good and merciful pleasure is. But the Lord be praised, your majesty, your

most honourable and wise council, have not cared what the greatest part, but what the better part doth, that the law of the high and mighty God may be known to your highness's people; as did David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah. And in your majesty's so doing, you bind not only the true and living members of Christ to give God thanks in this behalf, but also declare yourself to be the very favourer, nurse, and helper of the word of God, according to the saying of Isaiah, ch. x. Persevere, gracious king, in this quarrel and dangerous enterprise. Your highness shall not need to fear either the strength or cautelles* of your enemies, for there is no wit, wisdom, or counsel against the Lord, as Solomon saith, Proverbs xxi. No, although they had silver as the gravel of the sea, and gold as common as the clay of the streets. (Zech. ix.) For although the horse is prepared for the day of battle, yet the victory cometh from the Lord. (Proverbs xxi.) "I am he," saith the Lord, "that comforteth you, what art thou that fearest mortal man, either the son of man, that shall be made as hay; canst thou forget the Lord thy Maker, that stretcheth forth the heavens and layeth the foundation of the earth?" (Isaiah li.) Let not these diabolical sounds and speakings of evil men trouble your highness, nor your wise and godly counsellors, though they say "As long as the king is in his tender age, his council should do nothing in matters of religion." For those men's foolishness, or rather I should say their malice, is condemned by the word of God, which teaches how a king in his young age, with his wise and godly council, should abolish idolatry, and set forth the true and godly religion of the living God. Thus declares the notable and godly deed of Josiah, who followed the religion of his father, not Amon the idolater, but of David, declining not to the right hand, neither to the left hand: and destroyed not only the images of his father, but also those of Jeroboam and of Solomon. 2 Kings xxii. xxiii. This fruit of Josiah, his godly counsellors and virtuous priests helped. Even so Joash, being but a child, was helped by his counsellors in the like proceedings and reformation of religion. In case the princes, bishops, and priests, had not known it to be the commandment of God to have obeyed these two young and godly kings, they would not have consented unto his proceedings.

* Deceits.

But we see how glad they were to do it. The princes and counsellors moved no sedition; the bishops and the priests sought not for the defence of their own doctrine, nor to mingle theirs with God's, but were content with the sole and only law of God;—ye noble princes and counsellors, praise be unto the living God for your great wisdom and godly assistance in this behalf. And the Lord be magnified in all the godly and learned bishops and others of this realm, that have and do put to their helps and studies to bring the church of Christ to her old, and reverend perfection again; and all others that hinder your Majesty's godly purpose, whether openly or secretly, God will doubtless punish at length.

The godly and virtuous beginnings, most noble prince, of your father the king's majesty, Henry the eighth of blessed memory, shall by your highness be ended in a godly manner, in Him that can and will do all things for Christ his dear Son's sake. And a thousand times the rather shall your majesty restore again the true ministry of the church, in case you remove and take away all the monuments, tokens and leavings of papistry; for as long as any of them remain, there remains also an occasion of relapse unto the abolished superstition of antichrist. As I see in the writings of the prophets, that God requires the observation of his law only, concerning religion; and threatens all princes, priests and prophets, with his displeasure, who neglect or contaminate it with their own cogitations; I can do no less, howsoever the world shall take my doings, than exhort and pray the magistrates to bring the church to her first perfection; for if I should study to please man herein, I were not the servant of God. And I am afraid lest the disease that infected the pharisees, infect also many, now-a-days, who minister in the church, unto whom Christ spake, John v. "How can ye believe that seek glory one of another, and the glory of God ye contemn." God give grace, that I may not say, Hence will arise consequences much to be deplored. Help therefore, O ye bishops and priests, the proceedings of the king's majesty and his noble council, that all things may be brought to a perfect and apostolical reformation. It is not enough to lay the foundation of the temple, but there must be builded upon it gold, silver, and precious stones. But in any case we must take heed we lay no straw nor stubble upon the foundation, if we do, it will be burned.

(1 Cor. iii.) If we do not build upon the foundation, then shall we be shent* as the Israelites were. (Haggai i.)

Let no man excuse himself upon account of the king's majesty's age, for age cannot excuse the king's majesty himself. If his religion in his youth be according to God's word, he has the favour and promises of God to bless, preserve and keep his majesty and his realm, though the devil and his members would say nay. If in youth his majesty take a wrong religion, he shall be assured of God's displeasure, as it is to be seen 2 Kings xxi. Manasseh, being twelve years old, was crowned king, and in his youth again established the idolatry that his father Hezekiah had abolished, and by his so doing heinously displeased the majesty of God, and at length was sorely afflicted and punished for so doing. Behold the displeasure of God to a young king for a false religion. Jehoiachin, who was crowned in the eighth year of his age, for the evil he did in the sight of the Lord, was taken prisoner by the king of Babylon, (2 Chron. xxxvi.) with all the goodly vessels of the Lord.† This king reigned but three months and ten days, before the Lord punished the false doctrine he maintained.

These examples I doubt not, most godly king and virtuous counsellors, move you to be careful of the true religion. The Lord hath strength and power enough, seek ye him, and give no place to the infirm persuasions of the flesh, for the Lord shall be with you.

Such as think peace and quietness shall come to the realm a better way than by the true religion, shall know the contrary: see the prophet Jeremiah, chap. vi. Which chapter, if the king's majesty bear in mind and follow, it is worth a king's revenue: if a lord, the value of his lands: if a bishop, the estimation of his bishopric: if a merchant, the gains of his labour: if a husbandman, his oxen and plough. And the same God commanded, "Observe my statutes and my judgments, then shall ye dwell safely in the earth: and the earth shall bring forth her fruit; ye shall eat and be satisfied, and dwell in the earth without fear." (Levit. xxv.) It is a foolish opinion, most gracious king, and unfit for a christian man to urge to the magistrates of God, that in case the doctrine of Christ and his holy sacraments should not be decked and

* Blamed, disgraced.

† He was probably eighteen years of age. See 2 Kings xxiv. 8.

set forth with these plausible and well liking ceremonies, (that is, to speak plainly, with papistical superstition,) sedition and tumults were to be feared. Doubtless if the pope's members would not deceive the people, but teach them God's word, the people would soon see the truth, and willingly leave as much as God and their king should command them, as the deeds and acts of Josiah and Joash declare.

Most gracious king and noble counsellors, as you have taken away the mass from the people so take from them its feathers also, the altar, vestments, and such like as have apparelled her;* and let the holy communion be decked with the holy ceremonies with which the high and wise priest Christ, decked and apparelled it first of all. And from whence, mighty prince and sovereign lord, spring war and sedition? Come they not only from God being angry for the neglecting of his law? So we are taught by Isaiah (chap. l.); and Jeremiah (chap. ix.) says, "Who is wise and understandeth this, and he unto whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken and declareth, wherefore the earth perisheth, and is like unto the burned wilderness, that no man may pass by it. And the Lord said, Because they have forsaken my law which I put unto them, and heard not my ways, and walked not therein, but followed the desires of their own hearts, and after Baalim, as they were taught by their fathers." And because we mingle men's inventions with his law; for he saith "Men worship him in vain with the precepts of men." (Matt. xv.) And the Lord declares other causes of war and sedition in the ninth of Jeremiah;—the forsaking of his law, not hearkening unto his voice, nor walking in his ways, going after the pravity, and evilness of our own hearts; and, 1 Cor. xi. in the vitiating and abuse of the Lord's Supper; also the neglecting of widows' and orphans' causes, and not judging right judgment to the poor. (Jerem. v.) These causes must be avoided, or else truly the saying of Jeremiah will take place. (chap. vii.) "You trust in yourselves and in lies that profit nothing." The next way to turn the hand of God's anger and great displeasure against us, is to follow Jehoshaphat, the king, that appointed good judges and godly priests in every city. The judges to judge after the true laws of the realm, and the priests to do all things in the church according to the word of

* The Romish vestments and ceremonies used at the mass.

God, which teaches such knowledge and fear of God, and of the magistrates, that all the wisdom, laws, and books that ever were made, are but counterfeit and foolish in respect of it. Moreover, no king upon the earth has such a friend as is the holy Bible; for it teaches the people and subjects of the realm the fear of God, obedience to the king's majesty and his magistrates, and all mutual and fraternal love. If this example and counsel of Jehoshaphat be neglected, there can be no godliness among the people, as the text saith, "When prophesy wanteth, the people shall be dissipated and scattered abroad." (Proverbs xxix.)

All men should be exhorted to the doing of these godly offices, especially such as bear the name of bishops and priests. If they will not be desirous and glad to have, and to help the ministry of the church to the primitive and perfect estate again, the Lord proclaims vengeance towards them, and will not only require the loss of themselves, but also of all the people at their hands. (Ezek. iii. xxxiii.) Let them remember the complaint of God himself; (Jerem. l.) "My people hath been a lost flock, my shepherds have deceived them, and have made them go astray upon the hills." If these threatenings will not amend them, then, gracious king, and you, my honourable lords of his high council, must do with them as the mariners did with Jonah. What that is, seeing it pleased the king's majesty and you, my lords of his most honourable council, in the Lent, to hear by me, I have now, at the request of many godly persons, caused it to come abroad; and dedicate the same to your princely majesty and most prudent council, that your highness may be both judge and record of my doctrine unto your majesty's true and loving subjects. The which doctrine is catholic and godly in all things, nothing differing, but agreeing with the prophets and the apostles, as I am, according to my bounden duty, ready at all times to make answer, if anything shall be attempted to the contrary. In case there be now and then added a word more or less, or, peradventure, some sentence, yet I know well that the matter is not changed nor altered, otherwise than I spake it before your majesty; for I have memorials wherein I had written the invention, order, and disposition of all the matters I would treat upon, as I use, and ever will do, of all things I speak in God's behalf to the people. I write myself, or cause

another to write, the path and disposition of all things I speak upon, that I may as well learn a farther knowledge myself thereby, as make answer to mine enemies, if any should accuse me of false doctrine. The God of all strength and consolation govern your majesty and your most honourable council with his Holy Spirit, and give you the victory over all your enemies. Amen.

Anno MDL., September vi. Since the angel of God slew, in the army of Sennacherib, God's enemy, a hundred thousand and fourscore and five thousand men. Anno MMCCLXXXVIII.*

* The Reformers sometimes dated their letters and other publications from remarkable events and particular eras.—See Melancthon's Letters in particular.

THE

FIRST SERMON,

Made the 19*th day of March*, 1550, *before the king's majesty and his most honourable council, by John Hooper, preacher, upon the holy prophet Jonah.*

A Preface unto the Prophet.

It is the office and duty of every good child, that studiously labours to obey and follow his father's commandments before all things, to know perfectly the nature and conditions of his father's will. Whereof if he be ignorant, many times in the same things he judges best of, he most offends, and the things most pleasant and acceptable unto his father, he avoids and refuses as things most displeasant and unacceptable. Even so we, that are subjects and children of God the Father Almighty, can do nothing gratefully and acceptably unto his Majesty, except we first know his good will and pleasure towards us. For else we shall therein most offend him, where we intend most to please him; and again, shall perhaps deem, as pernicious and heretical, what his wisdom approves to be most godly and profitable. Wherefore, the first point of a loving child is to know what pleases and what displeases, what contents and what discontents his father, lest he should, by ignorance, displease where his sonlike affection, by natural zeal, desires to please. And it is the second point of a good child, his father's will once being truly known, diligently to observe and keep the same, lest he should, by negligence or contempt, seem wilfully to contemn the thing he hath, with diligence and study, obediently submitted himself unto. And in case (as such cases are most common and daily) infirmities, or other occasions, lead the son from the obedience of his father, the third point of his duty is, speedily to acknowledge his offence, and desire pardon and mercy for his transgression; as the prodigal

and disobedient son did; (Luke xv.) and David; (2 Samuel xii.) and so, after remission and pardon obtained, let him be more circumspect and wise how he fall and transgress again. (Psal. li.)

These propositions and sentences are so true that no reasonable man can doubt of them. But as the devil has left in the world no truth or verity, which, by argument and question he has not called into doubt; so in this case he troubles the minds of men with two questions. The first is, How and from whence the will of God may be known? The second, What the will of God is? So has he prevailed among men by sin, that the truth of these questions is unknown to the greatest part of the world, as it was in Moses' time, Christ's time, and now in our time, which is more ignorant and far from God than they. He persuaded men in those days that the will of God was known, not from heaven, nor out of the canonical scripture, as the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles taught, but that it was known by the writings, decrees, and statutes of men, who were in the earth, and that the will of God was to do what man commands, and not what God commanded.

But as almighty God left not his church then, without some that should keep the truth of both these questions among the people, to preserve them from the danger that must needs follow when truth is not known; so has he done now at this present time: and by the same authority as the devil, the author and father of all questions and lies, was confounded then, so is he now. Moses instructing the people in the truth of the first question, whence the will of God should be known, commanded them neither to look for it in Egypt nor elsewhere, but in the word of God, (Deut. xxx.) and St. Paul does the same, (Rom. x.) and St. John saith, "No man hath seen the Father, but the Son, and he unto whom the Son hath opened the Father. (John i.) God, therefore, and his blessed will, is known unto us, because he has spoken unto us by his dearly beloved Son, (Heb. i.) as he spake beforetime unto the world by his prophets. From Christ, therefore, and his word comes the knowledge of God's will; for the Father bade us hear him. (Matt. iii. xvii. John x.) Now as to what his will is, the truth also appears out of the book of God, and out of no other man's writings. (Mark i.) His will to the world is this, "Do

penance,* and believe the gospel;" that is to say, let every man bewail and repent him of his sins, and desire the remission and pardon thereof for Christ's sake, for whom, as the gospel showeth, our sins shall be forgiven. (John i. iii. iv. v. vi. Mat. xi. Rom. v. Eph. i.)

This doctrine, since the fall of man, has been always taught in the catholic church of Christ unto all nations, as the writings of the prophets and apostles testify: in which is fully and abundantly contained all truth and verity, and which are left here for our doctrine† and consolation. (Rom. xv.) Among which is also contained, as a most faithful witness of all truth and verity, this holy prophet Jonah, who was sent by God to the city of Nineveh to preach unto them God's pleasure, and amendment of life, or else within forty days both they and the city should be destroyed.

This prophet have I undertaken to interpret for two causes. The one is to declare unto the king's majesty, and his most honourable council, that the doctrine we preach unto his majesty's subjects is one and the same with that of the prophets and apostles; and that it is as old as the doctrine of them both, and not as new as these papists, and new learned men of papistry, would assert to the people. The second cause is, to declare which way the sinful world may be reconciled unto God. And for the better understanding of the prophet, I will divide him into four parts. The *first* contains, into what danger Jonah fell by disobeying God's commandment. The *second* part contains, how Jonah expressed himself in the fish's belly. The *third* part contains, the amendment and conversion of the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah. The *fourth* part contains, an objurgation‡ and rebuke of God, because Jonah lamented the salvation of the people and city.

The First Part.

The first part is divided into three: the one contains the embassage and mission of Jonah unto Nineveh. The second contains Jonah's disobedience. The third contains the pain and punishment of Jonah's disobedience.

The embassage is described with these words:—*The*

* "Do penance" is often used by the Reformers as meaning "Repent." It was so translated in the early editions of the English Bible.

† Instruction. ‡ Upbraiding.

word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying; Arise, and get thee to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

The reader or teacher of any prophet, or other part of the scripture, shall have much help by knowing of what place, under what king, and in what state of the commonwealth, the prophet lived whom he purposes to interpret: all these things, as touching Jonah, are declared in the second book of Kings, chap. xiv. He lived in Samaria, under an idolatrous king, Jeroboam, the son of Joash, a detestable idolater; and in Judah, at that time, reigned king Amaziah: and Jonah laboured in the ministry of God's word at the same time as Amos, Hosea, and Joel, the true prophets of God. The state and condition of the commonwealth was troublous and very unquiet, because the Israelites, for their idolatry in following the learning invented by man, and leaving the word of God, had been punished by God with many great and cruel wars; yet, according to his accustomed pity and compassion upon those that he punishes, to remove the occasion that caused his wrath and displeasure, God sent them, divers times, his holy prophets, who called them from their idolatry and corrupt living, as Elijah, Elisha, and this prophet Jonah; but all in vain. They would be naughty idolaters and vicious livers continually, in despite of God's power, and would, as we, now-a-days, for the most part do, rather give faith unto the prophets of men and liars than unto the prophets of God, who are true men. But their reward was, as ours shall be, except we amend, utter destruction and loss, both of themselves and their commonwealth.

The commonwealth and state of Israel and Judah being thus troublously afflicted, the commandment of God came unto Jonah, that he should go to the great city of Nineveh, as the text saith. In which words note, first, that no man can or may teach the word of God truly, unless he be called ordinarily, or extraordinarily—ordinarily, where there is no corruption of the ministry in the church, neither in doctrine, nor in the right ministration of the sacraments, which are as seals and conclusions of God's holy words. Where this integrity, I say, remains in the church no man ought, without the appointment of the higher powers, to intrude or appoint himself to preach or minister, even as it was in Moses' time and the apostles'. Extraordinarily,

is, when any man is called immediately by God, where the ministry of the church is corrupted as it was in the time of the prophets and of Christ, when it called to minister such as were of the common face and greatest multitude of the world; and would not admit, no not the high bishop Christ, and those that then were called the holy church, as is to be seen by Amos, Jonah, Jeremiah, Moses, and Paul, with others. They are to be rebuked, therefore, that intrude and put themselves, without lawful calling, either with money or entreaty, and by themselves, into the ministry of the church; which, among papistry, is a common practice, and daily practised. For if they sought not of their bishoprics, riches, and honour more than the necessary travails and labours that are annexed unto the vocation, they would not strive so eagerly who might leap up first into the bishop's and parson's vocation. There would not so many princes contend and labour for the seat of Rome, the nest of abomination, if there were not in it rather the patrimony of Judas and Simon Magus, than the labours of Christ and Peter—more ease than pain, more riches than burden. The text saith, that this prophet being called by God, was sent to Nineveh. Of this city's original read the tenth chapter of Genesis. It was the chief city of the Assyrians, to which Jonah was sent; and the reason was, if the head city of a realm be well instructed, there is better hope of all the rest. Therefore, God has used, from the beginning of commonwealths, to be merciful unto the greatest cities, and hath sent most preachers of the truth to them, as is to be seen in these days what God hath showed to London. And as he offers them first the tokens of his mercy, so he first punishes their unkindness with his punishment, if they neglect and contemn the grace offered.

It is to be noted that this city of Nineveh was idolatrous, and a Gentile city; never under the discipline and doctrine of Moses. Yet unto it the Lord sent his prophet, to declare unto the Jews that the ceremonies and works of the law, whereof they most gloried and extolled themselves, were not necessary to salvation, but given for a time, to exercise their obedience in the commandments of God; and to trust in Christ, of whom their rites and sacrifices were figures and shadows: further, the Lord declares by this embassage unto Nineveh, that the ignorant and superstitious Gentiles are more ready to receive the

living word of God, than the hard-hearted Jews; as it is to be seen at this present day. More easy is it to convert unto God ten simple and ignorant souls, than one that has been brought up in, and is wedded to the ungodly doctrine and traditions of men. Moreover, the Lord, in seeking the welfare of these Assyrians, declares that he is not only the God of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles. (Rom. iii. Acts x.) The text declares to what end Jonah was sent to the city. What to do? to bring in the ceremonies of Moses' law? Nay, but to cry out against the city. That is to say, plainly and openly to show God's displeasure unto them: and not against one or two of the city, but generally against the whole city, without respect of persons: against the king, the princes, the lawyers, the priests, and the common people. And this was the duty and office of all the prophets. (Isa. lviii.) Cry out and cease not. Also Jerem. ii. vii. The same commandment was given to all the apostles. (Mark xvi. Matt. xxviii.) The same is commanded by St. Paul; (2 Tim. iv.) "Preach in time and out of time." This is the note and mark to know the bishops and ministers of God from the ministers of the devil, by the preaching tongue of the gospel, and not by shaving, clipping, vestments, and outward apparel. The text answers an objection that might be demanded, wherefore God would send Jonah, a man of low rank, to rebuke so great a king and his council, and commonwealth.

Because their sins are come up before the face of the Lord.

From this answer we learn three things. First, that the Lord sees, marks, and is displeased with our sins, although we live in security, and are careless, as though our sins offended God nothing at all. Secondly, that when God sends such preachers as without fear show unto the world God's word and punishment for sin, their sin is full ripe, and they must either amend at the preaching, or utterly perish under the plague and scourge of God.

Thus Noah was a preacher before the flood, Jonah before the destruction of Nineveh, Lot of Sodom, Christ and his apostles of Jerusalem. Seeing now that God hath sent his word, his king, his magistrates, and his preachers unto England, it is (take heed of it) a sure token that the sins of England are ascended up into his sight, so that out of hand we must amend, or suddenly look for the most severe punishment of God. All men confess that sin never

so abounded, but no one of us says, "It is I that provoke the wrath of God, and I will amend." The nobility lay all the fault on the people, the people on the nobility, on the bishops, merchants, priests, and others. But will you be judged, at one word, by the testimony of a noble, wise man? Noble Isaiah, the prophet, saith, "The ox knoweth his lord, and the ass his owner's stable, woe is me, ye sinful people, people laden with iniquity, a seed malicious, lost children, ye have forsaken the Lord, and the holy One of Israel ye have provoked." (Isa. chap. i.) Let every man look upon himself, acknowledge his sin, and study to amend it from the highest to the lowest, for the Lord is ready to smite.

The third instruction out of this place is a description of God's nature, and long-sufferance towards kingdoms, realms, public and private persons; for though he might most justly punish and take vengeance upon us for sin, he is yet so merciful that he premonishes and forewarns of his scourge to come, by his prophets, apostles, and preachers, and willeth the world to amend. In case they so do, he will turn his wrath from them; if they will not, there is no remedy but utter destruction; as you may read Gen. vii. of the flood, Gen. xix. of Sodom, Exod. xiv. of Pharaoh. But let us rather follow the example of the Ninevites, and amend, than the example of the Egyptians, and perish. Thus much is to be taken heed of from the embassy of Jonah, in the first part of the chapter.

Now follows the second part, containing Jonah's disobedience, after this manner.

Whereupon Jonah rose to fly from the face of the Lord into Tharsis, and came to Japho, and found a ship pressed towards Tharsis: paying his passage, he went into her, to come with them into Tharsis.

Jonah was commanded to cry and preach against the Ninevites; but being afraid, and suspecting the difficulty of the vocation, he fled another way. Here, first, are two things to be noted; whither he fleeth, and from whence he fleeth: the text saith he fled to Tharsis, which some men think is the sea called Mediterranean, but the more true opinion is, Tharsis is the city called Tunis or Carthage. Japho is the city called Joppa, a haven town in Palestine. He fleeth from the face of God; that is, from the benevolent and merciful God who appointed him to the vocation of preaching.

From this text we learn many godly doctrines. First, how hard and difficult a vocation it is to be a preacher, that in case he be not comforted and strengthened with the especial mercy of God, he cannot, nor is it possible he should, truly preach God's word, as it is to be seen by Moses, Exod. v. vi. Isa. vi. Jer. i. ii. Matt. x.; and in this you may see the diversity between the ministry of God and of the devil, of Christ and of antichrist. Christ's ministry is full of labours, pains, slanders, and calamities—antichrist is full of care, pleasures, advantages, and honours, as you may see through all the kingdom of the pope; for there is not a bishopric or benefice can fall, but ten are ready to take it before it come to the ground. Yea, and help away the incumbent with an Italian fig before-time, as you may read of pope Victor the Third.*

The second instruction is, that whosoever leaves undone the office commanded unto him by God, flees from the favour and goodwill of God, as it is to be seen, 1 Sam. xv. Here all bishops and priests are admonished to beware how they leave their duties and cures. Many that bear that name flee from the face of God, and preach not the word of God, and instruct not the people after the mouth of God. Miserable and cursed is our time, cursed of God's own mouth, that there be such dumb bishops, unpreaching prelates, and such ass-headed ministers in the church of God. Christ instituted neither singers nor massers, but preachers and witnesses of his true doctrine. (Mark xvi. Matt. xxviii. Luke xxiv. Acts i.) He that leaves this doctrine untaught in the church, or teaches a contrary doctrine, flees from the face of God, and incurs the danger and damnation which is written, Ezek. iii. xxxiii. I will require their loss (saith God to the preacher) at thy hand. Let no man, therefore, be offended, if the crier speak against the faults of all degrees without exception, seeing he is commanded so to do upon the eternal pain of his soul; and Paul saith, Woe be unto me if I preach not. (1 Cor. ix.) Let all men take heed to do the thing that appertaineth to their office, lest they depart from the face of the Lord, as kings do if they make any laws contrary to the law of God and the law of nature, or suffer their subjects to be taught any doctrine for the salvation of their souls beside and contrary to the express word of God.

* Poison him. According to William of Malmsbury, Victor III. had poison given to him in the cup at the sacrament.

The justice departs from the face of God, when he for favour, preposterous pity, or for bribes, judges not justly. The gentlemen, when against charity they seek to advantage themselves with the hurt of their neighbours. The commons of every realm depart from the favour of God, when seditiously and disobediently they make tumults and sedition, lifting up weapons against their king and rulers, which leads to eternal damnation. (Rom. xiii. Num. xvi.)

But a man might say, Tush! it is not so great a matter if a man walk not in his vocation, neither yet is God so much offended with disobedience. But this fleshly and perverse opinion may soon be corrected, if men would consider the dangers that this poor man Jonah fell into for his disobedience. They are six in number. The first is, the perilous winds that troubled the ship. The second, his sin and disobedience is detected and made open by lots. The third, he is examined what he is. The fourth, he is constrained to give sentence of death against himself. The fifth, the shipmen cannot save him. The sixth, he is cast into the sea.

The first danger has two parts; the one shows the danger of the ship; the other shows how the mariners behaved themselves in the time of their danger. Of the first thus saith the prophet:

The Lord hurled a great wind into the sea, and there arose a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was in jeopardy of going in pieces.

We may think to escape the danger of God, though we neglect our duty and vocation; but, truly, it cannot be so. "Whither," saith David, "should I go from thy Spirit, and whither should I flee from thy face." (Psal. cxxxix.) There is no corner of the world wherein a man can hide himself from the knowledge and punishment of God, if we neglect the works of our vocation. He hath all things in his hand, heaven, earth, the winds, and the waters, with which he punishes the wickedness of transgressors at his pleasure when he will, as it is to be seen. (1 Sam. vii.)

Of this place of the text we learn, that whosoever, contrary to God's commandment, studies to avoid one evil, falls into many. The bishop or the preacher that for the love or fear of the world neglects to speak the truth, falls into the burning and damnation of his own conscience. The people that allege their poverty for acting

against God's law, lose body, soul, wife, children, and all together. The corrupt judge in contriving to serve his own turn or his friend's in corrupting of justice, brings both himself and his friend into the danger of eternal damnation. The text proceeds to show how the mariners behaved themselves in this danger, which is diligently to be noted; for in them is expressed a very lively image of all men that lack faith, how they fear above measure, in the time of trouble.

Their doings are expressed four ways: first, their faith; second, each of them calls upon his own God; third, they lighten the ship; fourth, they wake Jonah out of his sleep.

The fear declares the greatness of the danger they were in, and their ignorance of God, who alone comforts in the day and hour of trouble.

From every man calling upon his own God, it appears there were people of sundry and divers nations. And, also, what is common to all men under the sun that have not lost the use of reason; when we are left destitute of human help, we call upon God not for love, but for fear; as it is said in the proverb, "Fear was the first that made gods in the world." These mariners are partly to be followed, partly not; that in the day of trouble they prayed, we ought to follow them; that they pray not to the one and only God, but every man to a different god, they may not be followed: for there is but one patron and helper for all men, and he is never, nor anywhere, known but by his word. Man's reason knows right well in the time of trouble that there is a God, but who he is reason cannot tell; therefore, reason worships an idol of his own head, under the name of God; and then man follows either his own opinion, or the tradition of his elders. And this is the fountain of idolatry; when every man thinks him to be his god, that he himself, his elders, or custom has taken to be a god. From hence come such a diversity of gods among the Gentiles, and so many patrons among the superstitious sorts of christians. These gods are altogether forbidden. (Exod. xx. Deut. vi. xxxii.)

They lighten the ship. When they felt that prayers availed nothing, they turned to labour, which, also, eased them nothing; whereby we learn, that all gods and goddesses are but vanity, except our God, the Father of Jesus

Christ; and no labour or travail availeth without the favour of God. The woman had spent all that she had on physicians, yet was nothing the better; (Luke viii.) so do the papists in masses, and yet their consciences are not more delivered from sin; and those that pray to saints attain nothing. If their request be sometimes granted them, it is a punishment of their idolatry. (2 Thess. ii.) The fourth thing they do, they wake Jonah.

But Jonah gat him under the hatches, where he laid him down and slumbered.

The text notes two things; one, that Jonah slept; the other, how the mariners awoke him to call upon his God. Jonah's sleep signifies two things. First, that when we think ourselves most at rest, then we are most in danger, as is to be seen by Belshazzar, in the prophet Daniel, and in Matt. xxiv. 2 Thess. ii. Luke xii. The second is, to declare the nature of sin. While it is being committed, the prick and danger thereof is not felt, but it rather delights: so Adam and Eve ate the apple without fear. And because God out of hand punishes not our sin, the devil bewitches our minds and wits, and would make us believe that he will never punish, and that God sees not our sin, nor is so grievously offended with our sins. So yet at this day sleeps the sin of them that persecute God and his holy word: the sins of false or negligent bishops and priests, the sins of the corrupt judges, and seditious people; but it will awake one day, as you may read Gen. iv. and here by Jonah. At the hour of our death, sin will awake, and with our own sin the devil will kill us eternally, except we awake betimes.

That they desire Jonah to pray unto his God, declares that all idolatrous and superstitious persons think one god to be stronger than the other. As it is to be seen in papistry at this present day, when as it is disputed which lady is best, our lady of Bullayne, or our lady of Rome; St. James in Italy, or St. James at Compostella.* Further, this text declares that idolaters always seek new gods when their old god deceives them. So is it among so called christians; when the matter is plainly desperate, they cast a lot between three or four idolatrous pilgrimages which of them shall be the patron of his health. But

* Images of the same saint in different places, which were worshipped as if they were different beings.

where the word of God is known, there is no suit but unto one God by the mediation of Christ, besides whom there is no health.* This God I commend unto you; unto this God make your prayers; forsake that heretical doctrine which divides your hearts in prayer, part to God, and part to saints departed; for God is sufficient to help, and will help alone. (Isa. lxiii.) To him be all honour and glory now and for ever.

* Salvation.

THE SECOND

SERMON UPON JONAH.

The Preface.

Unto every man is appointed his vocation; to one this, to another that; one to a private, another to a public station; and each of them is either lawful or unlawful. That is unlawful which fights against and opposes the word of God, as those that maintain bad life, idolaters, mass-mongers, common receivers, and maintainers of dicers and dice-houses, with such like.

In these, or any like them, whosoever continues without repentance is subject to eternal damnation. Other vocations are lawful, and stand with the word of God; of the which St. Paul speaks. "In what vocation any man is called, in the same let him abide." But in lawful vocations we transgress two manner of ways. Either when we bear the title or name of the vocation, and do nothing appertaining thereunto, which is condemned by God, who, in Adam, commanded all men to avoid idleness. "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread." (Gen. iii.; see, also, 1 Thess. and 2 Thess.) Or when we do in the vocation what we should not do; as, for example, if a bishop teaches a false doctrine for a true; if a judge, who should judge truly, corrupts judgment for favour or money; or for a merchant to wax richer by false contracts or corrupt wares. Into what danger each man falls, that any way transgresses his vocation, is to be seen by Jonah, who in avoiding one danger fell into six, as you have heard before; of which six we have spoken but of one: and in that one we noted many and profitable doctrines, declaring man's infirmity, which cannot help itself from the dangers of the body; and, also, the power and goodwill of God, who can and will save, both from the dangers of body and soul. All men confess him to be the true God, that can and will help all diseases, the Jews, the Turks, the

Gentiles, the good, the bad. But therein stands the danger, lest, instead of the true God, we call and invocate a false god, and under the name of god we honour and worship the devil, as these mariners did when each of them called to a different god; and as the Gentiles did, whom David speaks of, (Psal. cvi.) that they sacrificed their children to the devil. David saith, that they offered to the devil what they thought was offered to God. And Paul (1 Cor. x.) calls the religion of the heathen the table of the devil.

So did the Jews before us; and so do they in these days now, who for every disease have a different god and patron; as for the pestilence, St. Roche; for the war, St. Barbara, &c. In this danger of idolatry are all they that call upon God, and pray unto him otherwise than he has appointed by his word. And here we are admonished of two things. The first, that we offer no other worship and religion unto God than he himself by word requires. If we do, we offer an idol of our own head, and honour the devil under the person and name of God; as those do, that erect and build up images, and altars to say mass upon to the honour of God, which God never commanded. (Exod. xxii. Deut. v.) The next thing we are here admonished of, is, that we call upon God only in the name of Christ, for he is the door, the way, and the truth; (John x.) and he alone showeth us the Father. (John i. vi.) Here he condemneth not only the Jews and Gentiles, but also as many as would know and come to the Father by invocation of saints departed, by bulls, pardons, peregrinations, mass, and such other things. Let this error be corrected, and let us leave calling every man on his own god, and call only upon the only God that can and will, in Christ, hear us, as he heard the patriarchs, prophets, and the apostles. And that this may be done it is the office of the king's majesty, his council, and all his magistrates, to see that the true book of God, the holy Bible, be taught and received of his majesty's subjects, after the example of Moses, Joshua, David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, the noble princes of God's people. There was and is one more point of instruction, in that the mariners did not only pray, but, also, lightened the ship. In that they prayed and were not heard, you learn what a vanity it is to pray after the opinion of man; it avails nothing at all—it never comes before God, nor eases the conscience of

him that prays. Further, they did not only pray, but also laboured. We see our duty, that as God freely gives help, so we must travail, and do the best we can with prayer, not only to receive and obtain the free help of God, but, also, to keep it. Thus I thought it good to speak before I spake of the second danger, which is this: Jonah's sin is detected by lots; so saith the text.

They said one to another, Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause we are thus troubled: and so they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

When they perceived the tempest ceased not with praying and the devotion of every man unto his god, they understood that such desperate danger could come only from the wrath and displeasure of God, for some notable and wonderful crime; and they feared the more because the crime was not known, and no man was seen culpable of it. They thought it good, therefore, to seek the guilty offender by lots; and missed not of their purpose, but found Jonah, the rebel against God, to be the occasion of their trouble.

From this text we are taught, that the cause of all trouble, both in public and private persons, is sin, as we read Deut. xxviii. Levit. xxvi. The mariners understood that; and, if we are wise, we shall understand the same, and amend it, and not attribute our adversities to sun or moon, star or planet, as fools do.

Of this text we learn again, howsoever sin be hid for the time, yet at length it will be known; some by one means, some by another. By lots, as in Jonah and Achan, (see Joshua, and 1 Samuel xiv.); by their own confession, as David. (2 Samuel xii.) Let no man, therefore, think to keep his sin always hid.

Further, here we learn how every kingdom and commonwealth may be appeased when it is troubled. If the chief captains and principal occasions of the trouble be known and removed, then shall peace, joy, and quietness follow in the commonwealth, but never else, except the scriptures of God be false. Men of the best judgment in civil matters, many times under the name and similitude of a ship, understand the commonwealth. In case the ship, which is the commonwealth, be troubled, the master of the ship, that is the king with his council, should inquire diligently the authors of the trouble, or else the tempest of trouble shall never cease. At this day, gracious

king, the ship of the commonwealth is sorely moved with winds and tempests. Here your majesty and your most honourable council may not cease, if you desire the ship to come to rest, but take the pains to find out the authors of these troubles.

In case you will, as, indeed, you must, by some means find out the occasions of these troubles and unquietness within your majesty's realm, you shall not find, as many report, the gospel to be the cause thereof; for it is the word of peace, and the disciples thereof are assured of all grace, and God's favour (Deut. xxviii.); and Christ appeased with his presence the troublous waves of the sea. (John vi.) Upon whom, then, will the lot of unquietness and trouble fall? Upon Jonah; that is to say, upon every man that neglects his vocation, and does not as he is bid. As if he that should direct the rudder in a ship leaves her to the waves, he that should strike the sails, stretches them more to the wind, and so, to conclude, none takes heed of that which he should. My gracious lord and king, and you, my lords of his most honourable council, how many Jonahs might there be found in England? Doubtless, too many in every condition and sort of people within this realm, among the nobles, lawyers, bishops, priests, and the common people. Examine all apart, and prove them: the nobility make unprofitable expenses more than their ability can or is able to sustain; they feed a sort of idle people, never commended either by God's laws, or by man's laws: they themselves live idle, and will not labour, neither with hand, neither with understanding. What must follow but trouble of the ship, that is to say, oppression of the poor? (Isa. v.)

The lawyers in all causes have more respect to lucre and to vantage than to justice, insomuch that they rejoice, and other fools are rejoiced at them, when they can overcome in a false cause, and so their thievery catches up the labours and sweat of the poor.

The bishops and priests disquiet the ship of this realm two ways. One by the neglecting of their true duty, the other by a defence of a false and damnable superstition. In the primitive and apostolical church, the office of a bishop and priest was to teach in the congregation of the faithful the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, according to the commandment of Christ. (Matt. xxviii. Mark xvi. Eph. ii.) Now is this integrity turned into false

idolatry and devilish superstition—to sing and say mass in the congregation of God. Thus, like thieves and murderers, they do the abominations commanded by man, with massing, conjuring the holy water bucket, and such like; and leave the preaching of God's word as God commandeth, and as the prophets and apostles have left us examples. And when godly kings and magistrates require and command a reformation of these evils, the ministry of the church is contemned with such false slanders, that the ignorant people will do more for the bishops and priests of Baal than for God, for God's word, or his anointed magistrate, as appeared this last summer.*

The people and commonalty of this realm trouble the ship of this commonwealth. For though the king and magistrates do what they can, the people will never be content. Many of them live in idleness, and will not labour; and in case they cannot have what they would, they turn to sedition and treason, and care no more to kill and oppress their lawful king and magistrates, than the devil cared to kill Adam in paradise. (Gen. iii.) They should call unto the Lord for redress of their complaints, and not redress them themselves. (Psal. l.)

How is it possible, where every sort in the commonwealth offends, but that the wrath and vengeance of God should send winds of adversity unto our ship? I am sure that Jonah was never better known to be the occasion of this tempest in the sea, than I know these four sorts of people to be the trouble, and that they will be the destruction, of this commonwealth, if they are not found out betimes. But a man might ask, what should the king's majesty do in such a case with these four sorts of Jonahs? Let his majesty learn of these mariners; then shall he do well; and as they did with Jonah, so the king's majesty must do with these four sorts of people. As to what they did, the prophet shall tell his own tale, and declare the third danger he fell into, which is the examination, in this form:

They said unto him, Show us, we pray thee, how this trouble happeneth unto us? What is thine occupation? Whence comest thou? What countryman art thou? Of what nation art thou?

* Hooper refers to the rebellions in Cornwall and Norfolk, which were excited by the Romish priests.

In these heathen mariners we see a singular discretion, understanding, and humanity. What, if our christian mariners had suffered the like danger and detriment for any man's sake within their ship, doubtless, they would have sworn, and out of hand, without examination, cast him into the sea. But these men are wise that they do not only search to know his fault, but diligently seek to know all the circumstances how he fell into this danger, lest Jonah should account himself unjustly condemned. Of this doing of the mariners we learn two things; one, humanity towards afflicted persons; the other, that all kings and magistrates ought to condemn as a thing pestiferous and condemned by God's laws, executing the sentence against any man, before his cause and matter are heard; for it is contrary to the law of God, the law of nature, and the law of man; yea, God commandeth that no man should be condemned with the testimony of one man. (Deut. xvii.)

Here is for the king's majesty and his council one more instruction to be learned from these mariners. I said that four sorts of people were the occasion of the trouble of his majesty's ship, this realm of England, but I said not that every man of these four sorts was guilty of the tempest; therefore, there must be lots, or examinations of every degree, and of each person in his degree, that the innocent be not punished, neither the transgressor favoured. And these must be examined by the master and his shipmen; that is, among us, by the king's majesty and his council; so that in case the godly without respect of persons seek to know, and upon truth and knowledge punish as they know, the ship of this commonwealth shall rest in peace and quietness: if it be not searched for and amended, the ship of the commonwealth will at last be burst in pieces, which the Lord forbid. Amen.

THE THIRD

SERMON UPON JONAH.

The Preface.

We never read in any writers, whether they are holy or profane, of any kingdom or commonwealth that continually endured without tumults, sedition or war, either by foreign or outward enemies, or among itself by conspiracy, treason, and disobedience of subjects, but if the same evil were not in time taken heed of and redressed, it always brought the kingdom or commonwealth from trouble and sedition unto utter ruin and confusion. We will omit and pass over speaking of the kingdoms of the Assyrians, the Persians, Greeks and Romans, although of their original, continuance, and destruction, the holy Bible makes much mention in Daniel the prophet, and other places of the scripture. We will speak only of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. What troubles, contention, wars, sedition, and rebellion they suffered, and how at last they came quite to naught, the books of the Kings, and Chronicles record, and the prophet Jeremiah. What the causes of these troubles and destruction were, the godly readers of the scriptures are not ignorant; but the men of that time, the princes, the kings, and the priests, would not understand, but assigned false causes—such as the preaching of God's word. (1 Kings xviii.) For thus said Ahab unto Elijah the prophet: "Art not thou he that troubleth Israel?" and so said the people to Jeremiah: "The word of God that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not receive it, but we will do whatsoever seems unto us good, that we may do sacrifice unto the queen of heaven, and offer our offering unto her, as we have done and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem. Then had we abundance of all things, and well was it with us, and we felt no evil. As soon as we left offering to the

queen of heaven, and sacrificed no more sacrifice unto her, we lacked all things, and are consumed with war, and hunger." (Jerem. xliv.) But the true prophets of God showed the true causes of these evils to be the contempt of God's word, as Elijah said unto Ahab: "I trouble not Israel, but thou and thy father's house trouble it. For ye have forsaken the commandment of the Lord, and thou goest after Baalim." But the princes and the people continued to defend the false causes, and accounted the prophets of God, who would have corrected their error, to be seditious and treacherous persons, and so persecuted and killed them for their true preaching; till at the last they perished, and the realm with them; as you may read 2 Kings xvii., and in the last book of the Chronicles, in the last chapter. Unto the lesson taught in those two chapters, I exhort the wise and godly hearer to listen; for you shall learn from those places, that the contempt of God's word was the occasion of the loss of these realms.

The same evil vexes us at this present day. The ship of this commonwealth of England is tossed upside down, and the occasion thereof is imputed and laid unto Christ, and his holy word, though falsely; for Christ's nature is to appease and quiet all troubles and tempests with his presence. (John vi.) Therefore this false and preposterous cause of trouble must be taken heed of, if we wish the ship of this kingdom to come to rest. We shall never bring it to pass until such time as we agree and confess that Jonah is the occasion why the realm is thus disquieted, that is to say, such as are in this realm, who neglect or pervert their appointed vocation.

I said, O king, that Jonahs might be found among four sorts of people within your majesty's realm—among the priests, noblemen, lawyers, and the common people. But lest any should think I condemned every man within the ship of your commonwealth, we will follow the wisdom and commendable doings of these shipmen, who were not content to have found out Jonah the cause of their trouble by lots, but also they diligently examined him: the same, most gracious king, we must do. But before we take upon us their examination, we will pray unto almighty God for his Holy Spirit of wisdom, lest in this necessary and profitable examination we err and are deceived; and also that they upon whom the lots do fall, and who cannot justly excuse their faults, may learn to amend them and

turn unto the Lord, and from henceforth may live in purity and innocence of truth and virtue, all the days of their lives. So be it.

You have heard how Jonah for the contempt and disobeying of his vocation, had fallen into six great dangers. Of two we have spoken, and now we are come to the third, where he and his deeds were diligently examined, which doubtless was a great cross and trouble unto him; for there is nothing that displeases man more than to have his hidden faults brought to light and knowledge. God, notwithstanding, suffers it many times for our good and profit; that we being brought unto acknowledgment of our sins, might hate the same and pray for the remission thereof; and so it is better, howsoever the blind flesh judges, to have our sins, if God will, opened for our salvation, than hid to our loss and damnation. In this examination we see not only the danger of Jonah, but also the office of every good magistrate that means to quiet and rest his commonwealth, being in trouble.

Those should be examined, that by any sign, or probable suspicion, seem to be the authors of tumults. And thus using moderation in examining, the innocent and good shall be free from pain and punishment; and the culpable and guilty shall be found worthy of correction. First, therefore, let us examine the bishops and priests, whether those that know the will of God by his holy word, diligently teach and preach the same unto others. Then whether any man of that vocation, teach false doctrine in the church of Christ. If the one do too little in the first, and the other too much in the second, or the one neglect the first, and the other be diligent in the second, both are Jonahs, and occasion that the ship is troubled. Against the negligent sort, Ezekiel speaks, (iii. xxxiii.), and also Haggai with vehement words, and threatens eternal damnation to such as preach not, and build not up the temple of God's congregation. Likewise St. Paul. (1 Cor. ix.) Christ speaks against those that teach false doctrine, (John x.), and Paul. (1 Tim. iv.)

Among the noblemen, Jonahs that trouble the commonwealth may be found among two sorts. The one hath enough given him of God, yet is not content therewith; but for avarice and love of himself and his insatiable covetousness, scrapes and gathers together, whether with the law, or

against the law, it makes no matter, so he have it. This Jonah troubles the ship with all injuries and wrongs, and rather would add somewhat where indeed there is too much, than depart a little where is nothing at all. And in vain glory and pride of the mammon of the world, they will condemn and disdain the very image of God in the poor. Against them Solomon speaks. "He that calumniateth the poor, upbraideth his Creator." (Proverbs xiv.) Take example hereof, out of the ixth of John, how the general council of the pharisees laid to the poor man his blindness. Their reproach of God's work was reprehended. The insatiable and covetous are, also, condemned by Isaiah the prophet: "Cursed be ye that join house to house, and field to field." (chap. v.) The experience of this curse had Ahab, who wickedly took from Naboth his vineyard. If the men who have enough are willing not to trouble the ship of your highness's commonwealth, let them leave their ravening, and give God thanks for what they have, and according to their ability help, and not rob the poor. There is another sort of noble or gentlemen that make more expense than their revenues and condition are able to bear, and who live by dice, cards, uncleanness, fraud, guile, deceit, theft, and such like. Now impartial examination, not only by God's laws, but also by man's laws, will prove them not only to be disobedient Jonahs, but also stark thieves.

The lawyers, if they are examined diligently, there will be so many found among them who disquiet the ship of this commonwealth, that few or none will be found clear. And among the lawyers I put judges and justices, the one for gain, care not to defend the falsest causes and most unjust matter that can be brought unto him, and promises like a thief, the cause is good, till he has emptied his poor client's purse. Then he washes his hands with as much foul seeming of honesty as he can, and refers the doubtful cause, which is above his learning, to the ignorant men of the shire, to be judged at home like a fool; whereas his purse can no longer cause his prattler and ignorant lawyer to keep his cause aloof and out of the shire. And indeed such a subject as cannot find in his heart to end his contention according to God's laws, without strife, by the arbitrement of those that are his neighbours, deserves to find such a Jonah as will never leave blowing at his purse, till he has unladed it even to the bottom, and has caused him

to spend as much in recovery of twenty shillings by lease, as might have purchased twenty in fee simple. I condemn not the law, that is good; but these thieves that abuse the law: for their doings are nothing but guile and deceit, and a noble kind of thievery. Against which speaketh Zechariah in his v. chapter; and God says, "Thou shalt commit no theft;" "Thou shalt give no false testimony against thy neighbour." (Exod. xx. Deut. v.) These Jonahs do not only give false testimony, but also for lucre defend the same; and not for a day, but for a year, and years; the more shame it is to be suffered. The justices also are Jonahs, for they receive rewards and bribes, which blind the eyes (Deut. xvi.), and make them corrupt justice, to their eternal damnation if they amend not. Against whom speaketh Solomon, "He that acquitteth the evil doer, and condemneth the innocent, is both execrable and damned before God." (Proverbs x. vii.)*

Among the common people you shall also find many Jonahs; but that we may the better espy them out, we will divide them into the rustics, or people of the country; and into the citizens. All and every country or husbandman that lives not by his labour, and gives himself to idleness, and so moves sedition and treason against their king and magistrate; or in their private meetings and assemblies speak evil, curse or provoke any thing against their magistrates, and who cannot and will not learn, either to know God, or to obey their prince; these are those among this sort of people that are Jonahs, and trouble the state of this realm. Among the citizens are a great number that trouble the ship also, as adulterers unpunished, fraud and guile of the merchandize, idleness the mother of all mischief, theft, murder, blasphemous oaths, conspiracy, and treason, with open slander and rebuke of God's most holy word. These things and such like toss the poor ship, so that she hardly can sail above the water; and so displease the majesty of God, that he will never cease from sending tempests, till those Jonahs are amended, or cast into the sea.

But before I come to Jonah's answer upon his examination, because I know this saying to be true, that, "flattery obtaineth friendship, and the truth displeasure," lest any man should be offended for my truth and liberty,

* Latimer in his sermons before the king also drew a painful delineation of the maladministration of justice in those days.

I will briefly clear myself. Doubtless it were a pleasure to me to speak nothing at all, in case the necessity of my vocation, the danger of these Jonahs, and the salvation of this ship of our commonweath forced me not thereunto. As touching myself I am called unto this place to cry aloud; in case I do not, I know all the blood of these Jonahs will be required at my hand; which God forbid. It were better I should call so hard that heaven and earth might sound again at my voice.

The salvation of these wicked Jonahs moves me also to speak in this matter, and with the trump of God's word to wake them out of their sleep, lest they slumber and rest so long in their wickedness, that they go sleeping to eternal damnation. Therefore I call upon them for the amendment of their knowledge and life.

Further, the love I bear unto the king's majesty and to this commonwealth of England, compels me to speak; for I see the angry hand of God already stretched forth to punish us, if we awake not out of sin. Last of all, be it known to all men, that I speak for the condemnation of the evil, and commendation of the good. And that all men may easily find out and know among these four sorts of people, the Jonahs, and troublers of this ship and commonwealth of England, I give you one most true and general rule, which is this: whosoever, or of whatsoever degree he be, that is, or showeth himself to be, offended with this my free and impartial speaking of God's word, he or they, be they what they may, are the real Jonahs and troublers of this commonwealth. And these men love darkness more than light, more to trouble the ship than to rest her. But now to the text wherein is contained Jonah's answer upon his examination.

He answered them: I am an Hebrew and fear the Lord God of heaven, that made the sea and the dry land.

When Jonah perceived he could no longer cloak and hide his offence, he not only confessed his fault, but also informs them and utters his faith and the religion he had in God, unto them. In that he confesses his fault, we learn that the first step and proceeding to mercy and remission, is the knowledge of the sin. It is a thing most difficult and hard to the flesh to say, I have offended the Lord, and will amend; for either we deny our sin with Cain, or extenuate and excuse it with Saul. Would to God our Jonahs would acknowledge their faults, and not

excuse or extenuate them. It is but mockery once in a year to acknowledge and murmur our faults in the priest's ear; but we should from the heart repent the neglecting of our bounden duties, and unfeignedly amend them, which is not only painful to the flesh, but also grateful unto God. I exhort all men, therefore, that know themselves to be guilty—as indeed there is none of us who is wholly innocent—to say with David: "We have offended the Lord."

But it is not enough to confess our faults; therewith we must make a confession of our faith, but not such a confession as most men use, but such as may be most like unto Jonah's. And let them embrace only Christ and his doctrine, and worship God in spirit and in truth, as his word teaches. This I mean,—let the priests teach according to the word of God, the noblemen govern and rule thereby, the lawyers conform their law to God's law, and such laws as are contrary to God's laws abrogate and abolish. The people should hear the word of God, give faith unto it, and follow it. And so let every man of us say with Jonah, "I am an Hebrew," that is to say, "I am a christian man, and will, from henceforth, forsake my sin, which disquiets not only mine own conscience but also the whole commonwealth." Next follows how the mariners took Jonah's answer.

Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why didst thou so? (for they knew that he was fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them), and said moreover unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may cease from troubling of us? for the sea wrought, and was troublous.

In these mariners we see three things; fear; rebuke of disobedience; and taking of counsel how to save the ship. This fear, it is most likely, sprang of this: that the mariners had heard Jonah say, how he was commanded by God to preach unto the Ninevites their destruction, and the city's also, for their sin. The mariners knowing themselves guilty of the same, themselves being both idolaters, infidels, and of corrupt condition and living, feared the like punishment. Who will not tremble at the angry countenance of God's displeasure? But now-a-days our stony and hard hearts are past all fear, and turn the threatenings of God to laughter, saying in their hearts, There is no God.

That these Gentile mariners rebuked Jonah for his

disobedience, declares the fault to be so great when any man leaves his vocation, and especially the vocation of preaching, that it merits and is worthy to be rebuked of all men. But such is now the proud mind of bishops and pastors, that they will suffer no rebuke or christian admonition, but will be lauded and praised, yea, in evil doing and omission of their vocations, as it is to be seen in that horrible and wicked decree: "Si papa."* And not only the pope, but also every man that sleepeth and delighteth in his sin, or refuseth all manner of admonitions. If Jonah took well the reprehension of the heathen, it is more than a shame for one christian to forsake the admonition of another.

In that they ask counsel of Jonah how to save the ship, they declare a singular humanity towards a stranger; that, although by means of him they stood in danger both of life and goods, yet would they leave no means they could to save him, though it were with their own great loss and danger.

Thus we are bound to do as occasion shall serve; not to punish cruelly without discretion, but charitably with patience to bear with the weak, until such time as the law requires execution of the evil. Now follows the answer of Jonah wherewith he condemns himself, as it is plain in the text, and is the fourth danger he fell into.

Take me and cast me into the sea; so shall it let you be in rest: for I wot it is for my sake that this great tempest is come upon you.

In this answer we learn and know that it is the nature and condition of every penitent man, to judge himself worthy of pain and punishment. And it is so true that in case we judge not ourselves, and say: "Heretofore I was accounted and took myself for a christian man, but indeed I was the contrary; wherefore I am worthy of punishment:" we are but hypocrites and dissemblers. Thus should the nobleman, the lawyer, the priest, and the common sort of men, say, as David teaches. (2 Sam. xxiv.) When he saw the commonwealth punished, and in danger of destruction for his offence, he said unto the Lord as Jonah did: "I have sinned, I have done evil, what have these sheep offended? let thy wrath and displeasure be against me and my father's house."

* Sexti Decretal, lib. v. tit. vii. cap. x. In this decree it is asserted that "all the churches in the world belong to the church of Rome."

But, O my gracious lord and king, such penitent and sorrowful Jonahs are far from your realm; for none will confess their faults. They will rather say, Let the Bible in English, and the preacher of God's word, be cast into the sea, and so quietness shall follow, for it was never well since preaching began. But, most gracious king and honourable counsellors, these were Caiaphas fellows that said, "Ye understand not." (John xiii.) But what followed? It happened unto the wicked as he feared. They lost their commonwealth as their fathers did before, and came into bondage both of body and soul.

Now follows the fifth danger that Jonah fell into. The mariners cannot save him, as the text saith.

Nevertheless the men assayed with rowing to bring the ship to land: but it would not be; because the sea wrought so, and was so troublous against them.

In these mariners the Holy Ghost teaches us two things: the one, how they would have saved the troubler of the ship; the other, that they could not save him. In the first is noted the nature and condition of every godly magistrate that would have (if God and the law would) all men to be saved: as Moses prayed for the people that rebelled, and for Aaron and Miriam, his brother and sister. Joshua called disobedient Achan, son. Here the *partial* and corrupt judgment of kings, magistrates, judges, and such as bear office in the commonwealth, is strongly condemned, who serve not the law, but master the law; and for lucre and affection condemn him whom the law acquitteth, and save him whom the law condemneth, contrary to the doctrine of Solomon. (Prov. xvii. Deut. xix. Luke xxii. Rom. xiii. James iv.)

That they could not save Jonah: we learn that no commonwealth can be quieted except the transgressors be punished. God giveth no victory to the children of Israel till Achan be punished. (Josh. vii.) The plague ceased not from the Israelites till Phineas had slain the adulterers. (Num. xxv.) And the Lord saith, in Ezekiel xxxiii. "Ye lift up your eyes to your idols, and shed blood: and think ye, ye shall possess this land? Ye pollute each another's wife, and should ye inhabit this land?" Hitherunto alludeth St. Paul; (Eph. v.) "Let no man seduce you with profane words, for these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of distrust."

Generally, we learn that there is not a more pestiferous

hurt that can come into a commonwealth, than over much lenity, and preposterous pity, to suffer the laws of a realm to be broken and neglected, without punishment of the transgressor: as it shall be more declared hereafter. Now to the text, which contains the prayer of the shipmen.

Wherefore they cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's death, neither lay thou innocent blood to our charge: for thou, O Lord, hast done, even as thy pleasure was.

Of this prayer, first, we learn that the mariners were converted to God by the preaching of Jonah. Before, each man called upon a sundry God, now all call upon one God. They excuse not their old idolatry, for their old customs' sake, nor yet for the authority of their forefathers, but they simply embrace the truth. The same should follow, and it is written for our instruction, as saith St. Paul, in the fifteenth chapter of his epistle to the Romans: "Whatsoever things are written, are written for our learning: that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, should have hope." Casting away all idolatry and false honourings of God, we should, in Christ, embrace and receive the everlasting God and his infallible word; seeing we are not moved thereunto only by one Jonah, but by many; also by kings, by councils, and many other men of God.

The second thing we learn of this prayer is, how they desire God not to impute unto them the death of Jonah, who had not hurt them, but himself by disobeying the Lord's commandment: wherein we may see how the Gentiles and Heathen abhorred murder and manslaughter, and accounted it horrible and condemned by the law of nature.

They were in the sea, and no man could have accused them of murder; yet they well perceived that the eyes of God could mark them wheresoever they were, and would punish the fact. And they judged wisely; for so all the word of God teaches us, as shall now appear; for I will touch this horrible crime of murder more at large. Murder is committed two ways, by chance and ignorantly, or by malice and wittingly. Ignorantly, when meaning nothing less than murder, a man against his will killeth. Such a murderer by the law should not die, for God absolves and acquits him, and prepared sanctuaries and refuges for them in the commonwealth of the Israelites,

whither they might flee for their safeguard, lest their blood should be shed again. (Exod. xxi. Numb. xxxv. Josh. xx.) But he that of malice and willingly kills a man, should nowise be saved, for such the Lord commandeth to be put to death. (Exod. xxi. Levit. xxiv.)

And also in the time of the law of nature this was the commandment of God for murder; "He that sheddeth a man's blood, shall have his blood shed again:" (Gen. ix.) and so saith Christ: "He that striketh with the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. xxvi.) This sin is so horrible, that no indulgence or pardon should pity the offence, nor pardon the fault; but the murderer, even in case he fled to the high altar, should be fetched forth: as you may see in the case of Joab at the commandment of Solomon: (1 Kings ii.) and read Numbers xxxv. If the magistrate dispense, either for fear of him that should suffer execution, or for any profit or gain, and punish it not, he provokes the wrath of God against himself and the whole realm; for the Lord saith, he will not dwell in the earth till it be purged with the blood of him that shed the blood. (Num. xxxv.) Let all men in the commonwealth, therefore, know and fear this doctrine of Paul: "The magistrate beareth not a sword in vain." (Rom. xiii.) Let the magistrate take heed of two things: first, that under the pretext and cloak of the law, to serve his affection or gain, he punish not the innocent. In this the kings and magistrates of the Israelites offended, who, for the maintenance of their superstition, false religion, and corrupt manners, killed and put to death the prophets and the apostles. So Jezebel caused Naboth to be slain. (1 Kings xxi.) Secondly, let the magistrate take heed he absolve not for gain, affection, good intention, or for any foolish and preposterous pity, him that God condemns, and commands to be punished: for so doing Saul lost his kingdom: (1 Sam. xv.) read the place. And to Ahab, the king of Israel, for dismissing Benhadad, God said; "Thy soul shall be for his soul." (1 Kings xx.)

Even as there is occasion hence to admonish of justice towards evil-doers, so is there to speak of war, and how it may be used lawfully by magistrates. The magistrate offends when he begins or continues any unjust battle, or for affection punishes any innocent person: so Josiah, although he was a good man, offended in making war with the Egyptians, when honest conditions of peace were

offered, and he was slain for his labour. The magistrate, on the other part, may offend, if he, in case he see his subjects oppressed, will not defend them, as Abraham did his nephew Lot. Again, this battle he is daily bound unto, —to war against vice, and to punish sin; and in case he see any rebellion to resist the just execution of justice, he is not to fear; for God will help his proceedings. (Deut. xiii.) And it may be seen that God will favour the magistrate that fighteth against his own brother, if it be to amend vice and to kill sin; for the whole tribe of Benjamin was nearly destroyed for the defence of adultery. Further, a magistrate fights justly when he resists unjust force, whether it be of foreign enemies, or of his own rebellious subjects Of such laws as should be kept in the time of war it is written, (Deut. xx. xxiii. and Luke iii.) but our warriors have made war a means and way to all robbery and spoil. The captain, by his faith, is bound to have as many men as his allowance charges him with, but like a thief he deceives the king both of his number of men, and robs him of his goods; and also, for lack of true payments to the half number that he is appointed unto, he wearies out the good will of the poor soldiers, so that extreme poverty, with sickness, for lack of payment of their wages, causes them to care neither for the king, nor the commonwealth.

And as these unjust and already condemned captains, (unless they repent) with receivers, paymasters, victuallers, and others, destroy not only the law and majesty of arms, but also deceive the king, by pilling and polling* the poor and needy soldiers, so they decay and undo the whole commonweal; for they serve the commonwealth to little or no value at all: in serving of the commonwealth they enrich themselves unjustly, to the utter impoverishing and beggary both of the commonwealth and the heads thereof.

And both magistrate and soldier well merit the same; for the one trusts he knows not whom, otherwise than upon report: the other prepares himself to the war for defence of his country, with whoredom, theft, and all abomination; and by false and thievish means brings more to the war than is his own. No marvel then, though God set such a thief over him as will give him less than his due. True men were wont to go to battle, and such as prepared

* Robbing and cheating.

themselves with the fear of God to live and die for their magistrate and country; now the greater thief, and blasphemer of the God of battle, the better soldier. Well, God may give the victory to such blasphemers for a time, but doubtless it will not, and cannot continue. Look upon all the wars that Moses wrote of in his five books, and then shall you know the same. Wherefore, I humbly require all magistrates, both in peace and war, to punish chiefly these two vices,—adultery and blasphemy, in case they would have either victory in war, or quietness in peace.

As touching swearing and blasphemy, it is known unto all men of God how the law condemns it in the first table: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain: for God will not leave unpunished such as abuse his name." (Exod. xx. Deut. v.) Of an oath, I think it, therefore, convenient to speak somewhat. There are two manner of oaths, the one of custom or of sport; the other serious and grave, required and taken before the magistrate or judge. The first is devilish, damnable, and naught in every part, and forbidden by God to all christian men. The other, which is taken for the glory of God, the defence of the truth, or help of a man's neighbour, as necessity shall require, is lawful and godly. But in this lawful oath a man may offend two ways. First, if his heart and mind be not according to his words, but his mouth speaketh one thing, and his heart thinketh another: the second, if he that sweareth swear by any creatures. Both these are blasphemous before God.

And in case it be damnable in a naughty matter to swear by creatures, is it not the same, think ye, daily and foolishly, of custom, to swear by a man's hand, his head, by the mass, and such like? The more vile the thing is we swear by, the more is the oath detestable before God. Wherefore, in things not necessary and lawfully required, to swear by any thing, is sin. In weighty matters, to swear by any thing, except by God, is no less an offence.

This may we see four ways; by reason; by the holy scripture; by examples; and by the canon law. By reason, thus: To swear is to protest and promise that the thing we swear to is true before him that knoweth the thoughts and cogitations of the heart, which God only and solely knoweth: therefore is it blasphemy to swear or attribute the same to any creature, as they do that swear by creatures.

Again; every oath hath annexed to it an invocation and execration. An execration, that he by whom we swear may punish and curse us if we swear falsely. An invocation, that he by whom we swear would help us if we swear truly. But only God can save or destroy, reason would then show that he only is to be sworn by.

Secondly, The authority of scripture. This also is double: the one teaches by whom we should swear, the other by whom we should not swear: that is, by God and by no creatures. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and worship him, and also swear by his name." Deut. vi. x. "Unto me shall every knee bow, and every tongue swear." Isaiah xlv. And speaking of the calling of the Gentiles, Isaiah saith, "He that will swear shall swear by the true God." Isaiah lxv. And "They shall swear the Lord liveth." Jer. xii.

That no man should swear by creatures, you have Exod. xxiii. "Ye shall not think upon the name of strange gods: neither shall it be heard out of your mouths." In Joshua xxiii. the people are admonished not to swear by the names of the gods that the people used, whither they were going. In Jeremiah v. it is said that the people offended because they swore by the gods that were not God. And though people think it is no sin to annex a creature with God, hear what Zephaniah the prophet saith. "I will, saith the Lord, destroy them that swear by Malchon," (Zeph. i.), that is to say, by their patron. Where the prophet means, they that swear by God and creatures, match and set God and the devil in one chair and seat. Examples out of the scriptures: "Abraham sware by the most high God." "God sweareth by himself."

Polycarp rather suffered the flames of fire, than swear by Cæsar's fortune. (Euseb. libro iv. chap. xv.)

Also, it is forbidden in the canon law, see Causa xxii. i. "Clericum per creaturas, and et siquis per creaturas," and "Si aliqua causa," also, "Movet te iterum." Thus the laws begin, and the gloss* upon the same places requires us to swear only by God. I have tarried the longer in this matter, because I happened to see of late a certain book for the making of deacons, priests, and bishops, wherein is required an oath by saints, whereat I did not a little wonder. And how it is suffered, or who is the author of that book, I well know not. I am led to think

* Explanation.

it to be the fault of the corrector in the printing, for two causes; one is, because in the oath for the bishop no mention is made of any saints; the other cause is, that in the same book the minister must confess, at the receiving of his vocation, that the book of God, the holy scripture, is perfect, and sufficient for the salvation of man.*.. Before all things beware of an oath by any creatures, except you would be glad to have God's displeasure. Now follows the sixth danger of Jonah how he is cast into the sea.

So they took Jonah, and cast him into the sea; and the sea left raging. And the men feared the Lord exceedingly, doing sacrifices, and making vows unto the Lord.

Here we see two things: Jonah cast into the sea, and how the sea thereupon ceased raging. Out of the first every magistrate and king may learn their duty to cast out of their commonwealth as many Jonahs as they find are stubborn, and will not amend their lives. If Jonah in the sea could not be saved, who offended only in neglecting his duty, and yet confessed his fault, and converted the mariners, what may we think? Is it possible for us to sail or live quietly with so many obstinate Jonahs? Nay, doubtless—What remedy then? Let them be cast all into the sea. But lest men should be too much offended, with this severe punishment, as though I would all to be cast into the sea, I will desire the examination of the matter by the four sorts of people that I spoke of before; and so appoint of every sort whom the king's majesty must cast into the sea, or send to the gallies.

First, let us speak of the bishops and priests. Their office in the primitive and first church was to be preachers of God's word, and ministers of Christ's sacraments. Not to sacrifice for the dead nor the living, not to sing or say mass, or any such like. Unto the first original must all these men be called; else they are not shepherds, but

* Hooper also objects to some directions respecting vestments and ceremonies contained in this *first* book of ordination. His suggestions met attention. Dr. Gloucester Ridley, in his life of bishop Ridley, speaking of the second review of the Common Prayer in 1551, says, "The offices of ordination drawn up in 1549 were now added to the liturgy, and established as a part of it with these few alterations; the vestments therein required, and the introits were laid aside in this as in all other parts of the book; the shocking appeal to the saints and evangelists at the end of the oath of supremacy was struck out; and the ceremonies of delivering the chalice with the bread at the ordination of a priest, and the laying the Bible on the neck, and putting the pastoral staff into the hand, at the consecration of a bishop, were omitted."

ravening wolves to devour the sheep of God. And that this may the better be done, your majesty must begin with your chapel and chaplains; and appoint souls that labour for their livings to serve them. If your grace do it not, you shall put your own self in danger of God. And from henceforth make your chaplains men of the church,* and let the chapel† go. And when your majesty hath done this yourself, cause all noblemen of your realm to do the same. Then reform your colleges in the universities, and see that honest men have the leading and oversight of the youth. Such as will amend, let them tarry still in their offices; such as will not, your majesty must remove, if ever you would bring the ship to quietness. Unto the clerks‡ from henceforth as you will answer for it, give no benefice, or spiritual promotion, but to such as can and will preach true doctrine, or else teach unto the youth the catechism, and help the people with some good counsel; or else cast them all into the sea, that is, put them out of their office, and put better in their places. And beware of the ungodly pity wherewith all men for the most part are very much now-a-days cumbered, who will for pity rather let a fool or an evil man enjoy his benefice, than care that a thousand souls be brought to knowledge: this is no pity, but rather cruelty and destroying of the soul. Therefore if it should please the magistrates to make a law that no man should have bishopric, benefice, prebend, or other ecclesiastical vocation longer than he uses himself according to his vocation, it were wonderful well.§

The noblemen that buy their offices, and sell again the justice and the law that is appointed to the office, must be admonished, and in case they will not amend, into the sea with them! Put them out of their offices, and put better in. Those gentlemen that live upon dicing, carding, idleness, or with other men's goods, must also be admonished; if they will not repent altogether, cast them into the sea. Foolish and preposterous pity has brought both the king,

* Of the church of Christ.

† Romish chaplains. Many ministers were still Romanists in their hearts.

‡ Clerici, ecclesiastics.

§ Many ministers who still favoured popery, were allowed to retain their benefices during king Edward's reign; the patrons also frequently gave livings to persons who had been monks, that they might save the pensions they would otherwise have had to pay. This rendered the re-establishment of popery by queen Mary much easier.

and the laws, not only of this realm, but also of God, into contempt, and daily will do so more and more, if it be not foreseen. Now the laws that should be justly executed upon thieves and murderers are dispensed with, out of foolish pity; and many judge it were better to save after his opinion, than to condemn after the commandment of God. For they say, "Oh he is a tall fellow, and can do the king good service, it were pity he should be hanged. But in case they knew God's laws, or man's laws, and knew what best maintains a commonwealth they would say, "Such a thief or murderer can never do the king's majesty better service than when he is hanged for his fault, that other men may fear to offend the law, by his example." Mark how this preposterous and sinister pity, has brought the realm to be pestered with more thieves than half Europe beside; insomuch that a man cannot travel safely by the way with twenty pounds in his purse, though twenty men are together in company: as it was seen by experience of late days, to the great shame of all the justices of the country, and to the slander of the whole law and the realm.

The fraud, guile, and covetousness of the lawyers must either be amended, or they themselves be cast into the sea. For unto this both their craft and filthy lucre has brought the law, that whereas, at the beginning of it, it was a succour and defence of the innocent, now all honest men are so afraid of it, that they had rather, yea, and it were better for a man to lose half his right, than to complain and seek a remedy at the law. What may wise men think of that realm, where the defence and the sinews thereof are so weakened and corrupted?—doubtless nothing but ruin and perdition.

The sloth and idleness, the impatience and rebellion of the people, must be punished and amended, or else they will cast the ship, the shipmaster, (that is the king and his council,) yea, and themselves also, into the sea, and bring this realm to desolation and utter destruction.

Even thus, as the king's majesty must do in his realm, so should every man do in his own household. When there comes poverty, pestilence, war, hunger, and such like, he must diligently search whether there are any Jonahs within his house, that is to say, any idle and unoccupied men, any thieves, adulterers, swearers, and such like; and the same are to be amended or cast out of the house. Hereof your majesty must also take heed, that you know the faith

and conversation of your family: that whosoever of understanding and knowledge enters your grace's court, may see the majesty of a godly house, and perceive by the order of your family, that God dwells in the court and realm. But, the more to be pitied, it is so now that whosoever enters and marks the conditions of many men in the court, shall find in the most part of the house hangings of God's wounds, his flesh and his blood, with such blasphemous oaths as the devil himself, if he were incarnate, would tremble to speak. And great wonder it is there falleth not fire from heaven to burn them, and the house they tarry in. Likewise, whereas God's laws, and also the common statutes of this realm, forbid dice and cards; the more shame it is, they are used daily and hourly in the king's majesty's house; whereat not only the majesty of God is offended, but many an honest man is undone in the year. That dice-house must be cast into the sea. If it be not, God will cast the maintainers thereof at length into hell. And if all men follow this godly counsel of Jonah, what will follow? This that is in the text:

The sea shall cease his raging.

As long as Jonah was in the ship, there was no quiet; now, he being in the sea, all is at peace: so shall it be with us if we amend, and cease from evil doings, as it is written, Jeremiah ii. vi. vii. And this is easy to be proved by example, that no commonwealth can be pacified, except evil doers be punished. Jehoshaphat, before he could bring his commonwealth to any good point, restored good judges to the civil state of his realm, and true teachers to the ecclesiastical state of his realm. (2 Chron. chap. xix.) The same may we see in David. (2 Sam. viii.) So did Artaxerxes who sent Ezra to the Jews. (Ezra viii.)

The sam eorder Cambyses, Cyrus's son, took, though he was an idle man. He caused the skin of a corrupt judge to be pulled over his head, and to be nailed in the place of judgment, to put other men in fear how they corrupted justice. For the keeping of all men in order, it were well that men would think upon the law of the Corinthians: which men may read in the adages of Erasmus. The adage is "Proterviam fecit."* Whereby every man was

* Erasmus explains "Proterviam fecit" to be a sort of sacrifice among the Romans, in which whatever was left was consumed by fire, (as in Exod. xii. 13. xxiii. 18. xxix. 34.) It appears to mean that what could not be used, was to be destroyed.

bound to give account how he lived, and maintained himself. And the same law Solon had at Athens.

When the magistrate by negligence or preposterous pity, will not punish for sin, then God striketh, as you may see by the universal flood, and by the fire in Sodom and Gomorrah. Give heed therefore, most gracious lords, to punish these Jonahs, and to put better in their place; or else God will punish either with evil beasts, or with sword, or with famine, or with pestilence, as it is written Ezekiel xiv. But in case you will do it, the sea will cease to rage, as I pray God it may. Amen.

THE FOURTH

SERMON UPON JONAH.

The Preface.

St. Paul saith, "It is a most true saying, and worthy to be received of every part, that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i.) Unto which saying the words of our Saviour Christ (Luke xix.) agree. "The Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost." Who is among us all that would not rejoice at the hearing of so amiable and sweet a saying, seeing we are all miserable and accursed sinners by nature; and yet, full of misery and blindness as we are, we would be saved, and wish ever to be out of pain? But in this, all heed is to be taken, lest we understand these comfortable promises wrongfully, as the devil trieth to persuade us. When he cannot altogether bereave and rob us of the promises, he would have us construe and understand the promises amiss. And whereas these promises appertain to none but repentant sinners, he so dazeth* and deceiveth our affection, and the love we bear to ourselves, that he would persuade us God's promise appertains as well to the impenitent sinner, never minding to amend, as unto the sorrowful afflicted believing sinner, who will study the amendment of life; against which illusion and craft of the devil, Christ speaks; "I came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance." (Matt. ix. Luke v.) If we are destitute of this repentance, the promises of God avail us nothing. "Except ye repent, ye all shall perish." (Luke xiii.) And the former promises were not so sweet, but these threatenings are as bitter: not unto all men, but unto such as are obstinately evil or desperate. Against whom John Baptist cried, "Even now is the axe put unto the root of the tree. Every tree that bringeth forth no good fruit, is cut down and put into the

* Dazzleth, misleads.

fire." (Luke iii.) But a man might ask to what purpose I speak of this thing; doubtless, to prosecute and follow that with which I begun. I said that the authors of this unquietness in the realm, in the church, and in every household, were, in reality, Jonahs, and those that troubled the ship; and that they ought either to be amended, or removed out of their office, or else the ship may never come to rest. But that those who are cast into the sea should not despair, there must be some remedy found to solace and comfort such as are fallen into danger of drowning.

This is the way.—If they take the admonitions and the admonishers quietly, and rail not against them, neither wink at their own faults; but with a true repentance of the heart follow the prophet Jonah, who confessed his fault, and humbly asked remission and pardon for the same; so shall every sinner be saved as he was, according to the oath of God: "As truly as I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of a sinner, but that he be converted and live." (Ezek. xviii.) Except our troublesome Jonahs follow this counsel of the Lord, they shall be drowned in the water of eternal damnation, with Pharaoh.

But as heretofore you have heard how Jonah was punished for his disobedience, so now from the text you shall hear how he, repenting his misbehaviour and offences, was preserved in his dangers; how he prayed; and, at last, how he was delivered. And that I may the better and more plainly teach and open the same, I will divide the text that follows into four parts. The first part contains the behaviour and doings of the shipmen after they had cast Jonah into the sea. The second part contains how Jonah, being cast into the sea, was received into the belly of the whale.* The third contains the behaviour and doings of Jonah in the whale's belly. The fourth contains the deliverance and casting out of Jonah from the belly of the whale.

The first: the text saith, *Those men feared the Lord wonderfully, and sacrificed unto him, and made their vows.* The shipmen did three things,—they feared; they sacrificed; they vowed.

After they perceived the sea left his trouble upon the execution of Jonah, they neglected not the true religion which they learned in their trouble, but were better and

* Or great fish.

more strengthened in the same; for they feared the Lord, and honoured him only. Of these shipmen let us learn constancy and perseverance in the true knowledge of God; and when we are delivered out of danger, let us not give ourselves to liberty and folly of life, as we naturally are inclined and propense* to do.

Thus Moses diligently admonished the children, that when they had received the abundant benefits of the Lord, they should not, in their satiety and abundance, be unmindful of the Lord that brought them out of the land of Egypt, and the penury and scarcity of the desert. (Deut. vi. and viii.)

The thankfulness of these mariners shall be laid against us at the day of our examination for our unthankfulness. For God has not only quieted the sea for us, but also abundantly given us the use and advantage both of sea and land; and that not only for the rest and quietness of the body, but, also, he has appeased the sea of great displeasure and eternal damnation, by casting his only beloved Son Christ Jesus upon the cross, to cease and appease the wrath and displeasure between us and him; and yet we neither fear nor love him, but, with continual hatred and despite, contemn both him and his holy word.

They do sacrifice.

They thought it not enough inwardly to honour the Lord, but outwardly did sacrifice, to protest and declare unto the world the good judgment, faith, and knowledge, they had in the Lord. So should we do. Not only know God and fear him inwardly, but, also, outwardly, with prayer, thanksgiving, and other good works commanded by God, declare the same, as they did by their sacrifices, before the coming of Christ into our flesh; which were types and significations of Christ to come, but could not take away the sin of the world, as St. Paul saith: "It is impossible that the blood of calves should take away sin. Christ's sacrifice once offered for all, by that once satisfied for all sins." (Heb. x.) "And where is remission of sins, there needeth no more sacrifice." (Heb. ix.) It is, therefore, an ungodly doctrine that, in this time of the New Testament, teaches any other sacrifice for sin than the death of Christ only. If a question now be asked, Are there then no sacrifices now left to be done by christian

* Disposed.

people? Yes, truly; but no other than such as ought to be done without altars. And they are of three sorts. The first are the sacrifices of thanksgiving. (Psal. l. Amos iv. Heb. xiii. Hosea xiv.) The second is benevolence and liberality to the poor. (Micah vi. 1 Cor. xvi. 2 Cor. viii. and ix.) The third kind of sacrifice is the mortifying of our own bodies, and to die unto sin. (Rom. vi. Matt. xi. Luke xiv.) If we study not daily to offer these sacrifices to God, we are not christians.

Seeing christians have no other sacrifices than these, which may and ought to be done without altars, then should there be no altars among christians: and, therefore, it was not without the great wisdom and knowledge of God, that Christ, his apostles, and the primitive church, were without altars; for they knew that the use of altars was taken away. It were well then that it might please the magistrates to turn the altars into tables, according to the first institution of Christ, to take away the false persuasion of the people which they have of the sacrifices to be done upon the altars; for as long as the altars remain, both the ignorant people, and the ignorant and evil-persuaded priest, will always dream of sacrifice. Therefore were it best that the magistrates removed all the monuments and tokens of idolatry and superstition; then should the true religion of God the sooner take place.

They vow.

Most likely they vowed to go to Jerusalem, there to manifest the mighty power of God to the people, and to give thanks unto the Lord, according to the law and manner of Moses's decrees. Lest we should err in the nature and condition of a vow, there are three things to be noted. To whom the vow is made; what is vowed; and who it is that makes the vow. The vow should be made unto the Lord, as Isaiah the prophet saith, chapter xix. "They shall make their vows to the Lord." The thing vowed may not be contrary to any of the two tables in Exod. xx. Deut. v. He that vows must be such a one as is able to pay and satisfy his vow. So St. Paul advised the younger widows to marry, perceiving how unruly and vehement the passions of young age were, that they were not apt to live sole, nor to keep their vow, if they should vow so to do.

Now follows the second member of the prayer; how

Jonah, being cast into the sea, was received of the whale; and it begins the second chapter of the prophet thus:

But the Lord prepared a great fish that should devour Jonah. And Jonah was in the fish's belly three days and three nights.

The text contains two things: first, that the fish prepared by the Lord swallowed up Jonah. The second, how long a time Jonah was in the fish's belly. The things to be noted in the first are, also, two. First is declared the wonderful pity and mercy of God, that can and will help the afflicted in the days of their afflictions. Jonah expected nothing else but to die, and so did the mariners; for they besought God not to require the blood of the innocent at their hands; but the Lord, who is ready to help as many as call upon him, (Psal. vii. and xi.) left not his penitent and afflicted servant Jonah, but preserved his life, though it were with trouble; thus will he do with all those that are the Jonahs of this realm, in case they repent. Though they should be cast from all the honour and offices they have, better it were to lose them with the favour of God, than to keep them with God's displeasure: thus Zaccheus did, (Luke xix.) and Jacob. (Gen. xxviii.)

The means how God saves the afflicted are unknown to man, and man should not be curious to search too much for the knowledge of them, but should commend them to God; for many times God uses those for life that man judges should lead unto death: so was Jonah saved by the devouring mouth of the whale, which seemed unto Jonah's reason rather a present means unto death; so used he the ark of Moses, and the wonderful passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea. If we cleanse our knowledge, religion, and manners, the Lord will find means sufficient to save us; which we may not appoint to ourselves, but commend them to the providence of God. For many times, by the same ways that we seek the favour of God and our advantage, we find his displeasure and our own destruction, as Saul did. (1 Samuel xv.) He sacrificed without the commandment of God, and purchased the severe and just wrath of God. The Israelites who, of good meaning and intention fasted, and sought by that means God's good will, found his displeasure. (Zech. vii.) Caiaphas sought by counsel to have oppressed the proceedings of Christ, and oppressed himself and the whole state of the commonwealth also. (John xi.) Cicero

at Rome, Demosthenes at Athens, each put their commonwealth in danger, by their best advised counsel for the preservation thereof; and so shall all the Jonahs, extortioners, oppressors, deceivers, flatterers, and others of this realm, come into extreme poverty by the same means they seek riches; for the curse of God cannot suffer evil-gotten goods and possessions long to prosper.

Now Jonah saith that he was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights. Of this we learn that God helps not the afflicted immediately, but exercises them in their troubles. First, that he may the better humble them, and bring them to a true knowledge of their faults, whose greatness is such that it cannot be perceived, whereas the pain for it is easy and light. But the Lord would have us the better to judge of the fault by the greatness of the pain, and, therefore, the Lord is said to explore and try his people in affliction, as gold is tried by the fire. Further, his mighty power is the better declared, as he helps such as are quite in despair of all other remedies and helps. Last of all, this time of Jonah's being in the whale's body was a type and figure of Christ's being in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. (Matt. xii.)

Now follows how this man behaved himself in the time of his trouble. When he perceived in the fish's belly some hope and sparkle of life, he fell to prayer. But because prayer contains in it two things, the knowledge of the fault, and hope of forgiveness, I admonish all the Jonahs of this realm, that they acknowledge and leave off their faults, and beg pardon for them, except they will die eternally. The bishops and the priests that have, either with false doctrine destroyed the church, or by negligence not built it with the true word of God, let them acknowledge their faults, amend them, and ask remission betimes, if they will not die in their sin. The noblemen and the lawyers that are secretly touched with the word of God, and their conscience condemns them of wrongs, frauds, injuries, and deceits, let them not harden their hearts, but pray to the Lord to take from them pride, arrogance, blindness, and covetousness, lest they die in their sin, as Saul did. The people, let them pray unto God for knowledge and patience, that they may know and suffer all things, as true subjects ought to do; and that from henceforth they may hate discord, dissension, treason,

conspiracy, whoredom, adultery, idleness, hatred, envy, disdain, and such like, which provoke God's wrath, and lead to the destruction of a commonwealth. But this prayer of Jonah is so acceptable, that some men might suppose, that the place where Jonah prayed in had bettered it; as the foolish opinion of the world is at this time, which judges the prayer said at the high altar to be better than that which is said in the choir, that in the choir better than that which is said in the body of the church, that in the body of the church better than the prayer said in the field, or in a man's chamber. But our prophet saith, The Lord hath no respect to the place, but unto the heart and faith of him that prayeth: and that appears, for penitent Jonah prayed out of the whale's belly, and miserable Job upon the dung-heap, Daniel in the cave of the lions, Jeremiah in the clay-pit, the thief upon the cross, St. Stephen under the stones. Wherefore, the grace of God is to be prayed for in every place and everywhere, as our necessity shall need and want solace. Although I say that the prayer made to God in the name of Christ is alike in every place, because our necessity requires help in every place; yet I do not condemn the public place of prayer, where God's word is preached, his holy sacraments used, and common prayer made to God, but allow the same, and am sorry it is not more frequented. But this I would wish, that the magistrates should put both the preacher, minister, and the people in one place, and shut up the partition called the chancel, which separates the congregation of Christ one from the other, as though the veil and partition of the temple in the old law yet should remain in the church; when, indeed, all figures and types ended in Christ. And in case this were done, it would not only express the dignity and grace of the New Testament, but, also, cause the people the better to understand the things read there by the minister; and, also, excite the minister to more study of the things that he reads, lest he should be found by the judgment of the congregation not worthy either to read or to minister in the church. Further, that such as would receive the holy communion of the precious body and blood of Christ, might both hear and see plainly what is done, as it was used in the primitive church, when the abomination done upon altars* was not known, nor

* The popish mass.

the sacrifice of Christ's precious blood so trodden under foot and despised.

The third thing to be noted in this prayer is, lest in the port itself we make shipwreck, and, in praying, offend God, to whom we pray. Unto him that only seeth the cogitations of our heart, and can and will do all things for us accordingly—help in need, and punish in due season—which only God can do. And unto him should we direct and make our prayer, after the examples of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, who called always upon their God; for such as direct their prayers otherwise, they all fall and err: against whom speaketh Isaiah, (lxv.) Jeremiah, (ii. xv.) Ezekiel, (xiv.) And the Lord is angry with his people, as Isaiah saith, (chap. ix.) because they turned not unto him that struck them, nor unto the God of armour. And in the prophet Hosea, (chap. vii.) "They called not to me," saith the Lord, "in their hearts." And in the same place, a little after, the prophet saith, "They are returned, but not unto the Highest." So likewise are they no less to be blamed that divide their hearts, part unto God, and part unto creatures, of whom Hosea speaks. (chap. x.)

If these three things that Jonah used in the whale's belly, were used by the people that profess Christ's name, in our temples, blessed were we. But it is quite the contrary; we know not what prayer is, nor yet will take the pains to learn it; the more is the pity, and the more is God stirred to vengeance and punishment, and the more cruel shall the pain be when it is executed by God.

As we know by the text that he prayed, so may we know by the same how he prayed, and what was the form and manner of his prayer. That is very requisite to be known, marked and borne away;—the effect and sum thereof consists in three points. In two of the first verses he puts forth briefly the abridgement and epitome of his prayer; then he declares the greatness of his danger and jeopardy; thirdly, he sets forth the pity and mercy of God. The first part is thus:

From my troubles I have called upon the Lord, and he heard me: from the depths of the deepest I cried, and thou heardest my voice.

Out of this first part we learn two doctrines, the one that we should not despair, nor wholly cast off God in adversity. The other, that in adversity we should not flee, nor

seek any forbidden, or unlawful means of help. And these two things Jonah observed in this his trouble; and we should do the same according to the commandment of God. "Call upon me in the day of thy troubles, and I shall hear thee," (Psal. l.), as he did at all times. (Psal. xcix.) And this cry of Jonah was rather the cry of his heart, than the noise or sound of his mouth, as Moses, Exod. xiv., and the good woman, 1 Sam. i.

The circumstances of true prayer being observed, the Lord hears this faithful prayer according to his promises. Whereof all idolatrous bishops and priests may learn, that if they will forsake their idolatry, and call unto the Lord, mercy is ready for them. And if the lascivious, avaricious, and covetous gentleman or lawyer will acknowledge his fault, and ask remission for it, it will be forgiven him. And so shall it be to the common sort of people, if they acknowledge their disobedience, rebellion, treason, pride, contempt of the superior powers, and ask mercy for them.

The second part of his prayer contains a description of dangers that he was in, thus:

Thou hast cast me down deep in the midst of the sea, and the flood compassed me about: yea, all the waves and rolls of water went over me: I thought I had been cast away out of thy sight; but I will yet again look toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me even to my very life: the deep lay about me, and the weeds were wrapt about my head. I went down to the bottom of the hills, and was barred in with the earth for ever.

It is the common lot of all holy men, in the holy scripture, for the most part to make mention in their prayers of their dangers, and to amplify them, that their greatness may be better marked and known. And this is done for three causes: the one because, with the numbering, and repeating of their great dangers, they may the more inflame themselves to ardent and earnest prayer; for the more a man feels his own grief, the more diligent he will be to seek a remedy. The other is to bring a man the more to contempt and hatred of himself; for the greatness of the pain declares the enormity and filthiness of the transgression and sin. The third is to set forth the power and good will of God, that can and will help in extreme and desperate evils, and save with superabundant mercy, when he finds iniquity and sin to abound. (Rom. v.) And so, many times, the slavery and miserable state of the afflicted,

sets forth the majesty and richness of God's mercy. (Matt. viii. ix. John viii. ix.)

This man of God noted and knew the displeasure of God against sin; but our Jonahs sleep quietly, and feel not the pain of sin; and this security and insensibility under the wrath of God, comes by the ignorance that almost the whole world is laid in, touching the danger of their vocations. If the clergy, bishops and priests would think upon the pain annexed unto their vocation, if they do it not truly, faithfully, and as they are commanded of God: "I will require their blood at thy hand," (Ezek. iii. xxxiii.); they would serve the Lord and use more diligence in their vocation than they do. If the noblemen would think upon this text, "The Lord resists the proud;" and this text Isaiah v. "Woe be unto you that join house to house, and field to field;" and the lawyers and judges that which is written Proverbs xvii. and Matthew xxiii., they would not sleep in great rest, nor use the places they are in with such partiality and falsehood as they do. If the common people would think upon the iii. of Genesis, where labour is commanded, and also 1 Thessalonians iv. 2 Thessalonians iii., they would not forsake labour and seek weapons, and strength to turn and alter the state and order which God has appointed upon the earth. But this I say to every man of each of these degrees mentioned—the less they feel the danger of eternal damnation, the nearer they are unto eternal pain, and they have already one foot in hell, which shall never come again, but the whole body and soul shall follow, except they repent; for no man is farther from heaven, than he that feareth not hell; and no man farther from grace than he that feeleth not the danger of sin: as we see no man is in a more dangerous disease, than he that knows not himself to be sick, as those men are that have fallen into frenzy and madness. Let us learn with Jonah to know in what danger we are.

Yet is there another thing to be noted in Jonah's words, where he saith: "Thou hast cast me down." By these words those that are condemned by the magistrates, should acknowledge that it is not the magistrate that puts them to execution, but God, whose ministers they are; and they ought to save such as God's word saveth, and condemn those that God's word condemneth. It is God that sendeth to hell, that hangeth for transgression; as Jonah

knew in this his prayer. He accused not the mariners that cast him into the sea, but confessed that the execution of the evil was from God.

Let therefore from henceforth the bishop and parson that is deprived of their vocation for their misbehaviour, and false or negligent preaching, say, "The Lord hath cast me down." So let the noblemen and the lawyers say, when their covetousness, fraud and deceit cry vengeance before God until they are displaced: "The Lord hath cast me down." And the same let the traitorous subject, the thief, the murderer, and idle man say; "The Lord brought me to the gallows; the Lord would I should trouble the commonwealth no longer."

And I do here appeal and charge it upon the conscience of every subject of this realm of England. First, those that have the doings, receivings, occupyings and custody, oversight, rule, and office, of the king's majesty's goods or lands. Then, their conscience to whom the king and his council have committed the teaching and instruction of his people, in the knowledge and fear, both of God and man. Finally, I appeal to the consciences of the subjects of this realm which merit, some for deceit, falsehood, and deceiving the king, loss both of body and goods; some for preaching erroneous seditions and false doctrine, or for neglecting the preaching of the true doctrine, deserve most cruel punishment; some for false judgment merit the loss of their lives; the rest for rebellion, sedition and treason, deserve the sword and the gallows—whether in suffering the pain appointed for such transgression, they can from their hearts say: "This I suffer worthily, and will the vengeance of God,* because I have sinned against him, and the law of my commonwealth." No, no, every man extenuates, yea excuses all things done against God and his order. But I will suppose thee, thou thief and robber of the king and of the commonwealth, to be king, and the king to be thy officer and receiver: wouldest thou thy officer should deceive thee? Or thou traitorous and false subject, if thou wert king and the king thy subject, wouldest thou be contented that thy subjects should conspire and imagine how to pluck thee out of thy realm. What if my lord bishop and master parson were kings, think ye their majesties would be contented that their bishops and priests

* Am ready to endure his providential correction.

should whisper a tale of treason and sedition in auricular confession, or rather privy conventicles, to their subjects?*

Speak all of you that I have supposed to be kings, and speak from your consciences; I dare say you would not be thus handled. Why then do ye handle another so? "Do not to another, that thou wouldest not another should do unto thee." Amend therefore, every man, and be true and faithful unto the realm, to the king and laws of him and his realm. And for the love of God, ye noblemen, gentlemen, justices and lawyers, enforce the wholesome laws of the realm, the statutes and commissions that have been made by the king and the council, for the preservation of the commonwealth, and the help of the poor, both which are afflicted with your insatiable and never-contented covetousness. Let them be faithfully executed, and uprightly interpreted, according to the mind and meaning of those that made them; for the evil construing, and sinister taking of good laws and the godly meaning of godly magistrates, not only afflict the poor of this realm, but will, at length, surely cast the whole realm under the water. Now comes into my mind the practice of wrongly taking the governor's word and commandment, how perilous and dangerous a thing it is.

I was once in the race of Britain† with a fore wind, and contrary flood, the seas in that place going hollow, and that by reason of a multitude of rocks in the same place. The master of the ship, to conduct it the better, sat upon the main yard to see the seas aforehand, and cried to him that steered at the stern, upon which side he should steer the ship, best to avoid the danger of the sea. The wind blowing high, when the master cried a-larboard, he that steered mistook it, and steered a-starboard; and this once mistaking of the master's law, had almost cast us under the water. Then thought I, it is not without cause that wise men compare a commonwealth to a ship, for the same thing loses or saves them both; for in case the master's officer in the ship obey not his law, the ship will be lost. So shall this commonwealth and every other, if when the king and his council make laws to help and save the poor, he who steers at the hinder part of the ship

* Most of the clergy who still adhered to popery in their hearts had secretly promoted the rebellions against king Edward the sixth.

† Of Brittany, probably the race (or rapid stream) of Alderney.

behind the king's back, follows not that which he is bid to do, but that which he himself listeth, and which is for his own private advantage to do ; and thus puts both the ship, the master, and all the mariners, in danger of drowning. Amend therefore every man betimes; if you do not, the Lord at length will cast you out from all you have, to the destruction of you and yours.

But one thing I pray all you that are true and faithful subjects and friends unto the kingdom, and the king's majesty—that you will not impute, nor burden the king's majesty, nor his council with the oppression, extortion, theft, injuries, deceits, falsehoods, defrauds, cautells,* violences and other wrongs, that those thieves and destroyers use towards you and the commonwealth:—if such deeds come to their knowledge, I doubt not but your wrongs should be redressed by them. And this I know myself by experience in weighty matters, that the king's majesty's council has not only heard, but also given sentence according to the truth, and used me rather like fathers, than like judges in such matters. If they had taken the things which were spoken by me honestly, as they were evil construed by my accusers, there could have followed no less than my great undoing, and hinderance to all my labours and pains in the vineyard of the Lord. Therefore, pray to him that all good laws may be justly executed, and all others amended, which God grant.

There is one word more in the text which must not be neglected, where Jonah saith, he shall see again the holy temple of the Lord; in which words note two things. The one, that in the most obscure and dark troubles of adversity, God suffers some spark of consolation to shine; the other, to what end a man being in trouble, should desire to be delivered—to extol and praise for ever the name of the Lord. (Isaiah xxxviii.) But how this deliverance is practised in our days the Lord knoweth. We do not desire the Lord, to deliver us, to glorify and laud his holy name, as Jonah did and David; (Psalm li. cxviii.) but from sickness and adversity we turn ourselves to all ungodliness and liberty of life ; and where we were evil before trouble and sickness, we are worse after; therefore when God has wasted one rod upon us in punishment, he begins to make another more sharp than the first. And even as the fall again into disease, before the first attack

* Crafty proceedings.

is quite past and overcome, brings the more danger to the patient, even so the relapse and fall again into the displeasure and judgment of God, not only doubles the grief and pain of the punishment, but also endangers the afflicted person with the horror and damnation of hell fire; for every relapse aggravates the pain for sin. After this follows the third part of Jonah's prayer, in which is contained a commendation of God's mercy.

But thou, O Lord my God, hast brought my life again out of corruption. When my soul fainted within me, I thought upon the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, even unto thy holy temple.

In these verses is declared both the power of God and the truth of God—his power that saved his life, where there was no likelihood but of death, yea death itself; for it is he alone that bringeth to hell, and saveth from thence; (1 Sam. i.)—his truth is declared, that whereas he saith, "Call upon me in the days of thy trouble, and I will hear thee." (Psal. l.), here he performs it in this afflicted Jonah; of whom we should learn both to fear his threatening justice, and to trust unto his promised mercy; for he can do both; can punish the evil that will not repent, and save the afflicted that fleeth unto his mercy.

They that hold vain vanities will forsake his mercy.

The people of God have a custom in their prayers; as they behold the true and saving health of the living God, so of the contrary part, to consider the false and deceitful help of the false gods, as David does many times, and here also Jonah. So do the true christians at this day; in beholding the mercy of God in Christ, they behold and wonder at the fond and false hope, help and trust, that men put in vanity, error, and forbidden help of the mass, water, bread, salt, bowing, candles, pardons and such like. And christian reader, note this, that the prophet calls false and vain religion, vanity. So judge thou every religion that is not contained within the word of God, to be nothing else than vanity, from whencesoever it cometh; though the world would bear thee in hand that it were as true as the gospel. But ask the true judge, the word of God, and it will show thee it is superstition, beggary and treachery unto the soul; and they lose the benevolence and mercy which God has promised in Christ to as many as seek him in truth, and in verity. Out of this text you see the truth of the doctrine of Christ, which is written, (Matthew vi.) No man

can serve two masters, the true religion of God, and the superstition of man. Nor can he be saved that trusts in Christ hanged upon the cross, and in Christ offered in the mass: for the one is plain contrary unto the other; therefore Jonah confesses what he will do—follow the one and forsake the other, as the text of his prayer saith.

But I will do thee sacrifice with the voice of thanksgiving, and will pay that I have vowed.

Here Jonah tells what he will do when he is delivered from his trouble. He will extol, magnify, and set forth the goodness of God. Then he will perform the vow he made, that is to say, live obediently unto the commandment of God. This must we do, and not use health and quietness as an occasion to sin, liberty, and filthiness of life. Jonah also amends the foolish opinion of the Jews, who trusted to have obtained remission of their sins, by the offering up of the calves and other brute beasts; but Jonah declares that the Lord delights in no sacrifice that man can do, except in the sacrifice of thanksgiving: for Christ only is the propitiatory sacrifice; and he alone merits the remission of sin before God. If then in the time of the shadow,* Jonah knew that the Lord would accept the sacrifice of the heart and mouth which was endued with faith, more than the sacrifice of the calves, how much more now will he do the same of us, rather than the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass! Jonah, well trusting God's mercy and promises, shows a reason wherefore he will laud and praise the Lord, when he comes out of trouble and saith,

For salvation cometh of the Lord.

As though he had said, No man can give health of body or soul except God, as David saith in almost every Psalm, and Isaiah (xliii. xliv.) If this doctrine were well imprinted in our minds, we should not go astray to every strange God, and superstition of man, as the world doth now-a-days more like heathens than christians. Further, we should the better sustain and endure adversity, seeing it can neither go nor come without the permission of God. Gracious king, and my lords of the council, remember this doctrine of Jonah, and then you need not fear to reform this church of England unto the primitive state and apostolical doctrine. Let the devil with all his ministers do what they will; if the judges remembered this doctrine, they would not fear to punish evil doers; if the people

* The law having a shadow of good things to come, &c. Heb. x.

knew this doctrine, they would not take armour and weapons against the magistrates, but seek help from God. Above all men let the preacher comfort himself with this word, for he is in danger of the most displeasure, if he preach not truly. Also let the persecutors of God's word, take heed of this doctrine; for in the Lord shall be their health, let them persecute what and how they will; though they burn, the Lord will quench; if they kill, the Lord will make alive; if they curse, the Lord will bless; if they damn to hell, the Lord will save in heaven. Blessed then is the man that trusteth in the Lord.

Now follows the conclusion of the chapter.

And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it cast out Jonah again upon the dry land.

Here we may see the effect of godly and earnest prayer —that it obtains deliverance from danger. Of this in the whole we learn that there is no danger so great, but we may escape, if with penitence* we return unto the Lord, and ask him mercy. As many Jonahs, therefore, as are in this realm, that have or do, either falsely use or negligently contemn their vocation, let them acknowledge their offence, and beg pardon; else doubtless, though penitent Jonah was cast on dry land, they shall remain for ever in the pains of hell, as Saul. Let them therefore that are bishops and priests, see in what danger they are, that neglect or abuse their vocation: if they amend, health cometh, as unto this miserable and penitent man. This I speak to the noblemen and to the lawyers, and also to the common people. I pray God that all Jonahs of this realm may thus repent. In case all do not, yet may some follow this godly man that may be saved, as he is. So be it.

* Repentance.

THE FIFTH

SERMON UPON JONAH.

The Preface.

THERE is no man that has any respect or care at all of his health, who would not be glad that his faith, knowledge, and faults should be approved and well taken of by God: for he knows that all labours and pains are in vain and lost, which are not commended by him. Yet, in this respect, men grievously offend and go out of the way, when the thing that God most esteems is most neglected, on our parts, and what God hates, and is displeased with, we most diligently do and exercise ourselves in. Men are brought to such ignorance and contempt of God and his word, that they judge that every thing which is done of a good intention and well meaning, should please the Lord; from whence has sprung this infinite, dangerous, and superstitious number of sacrifices, and other servings of God. But what, according to the right judgment of the scripture, chiefly pleases God? Obedience—that is to say, when every man in his state and his vocation does what he is commanded to do; as it is written, (1 Sam. xiii.) "I desire obedience and not sacrifice." Let no man, therefore, think he can do any thing acceptable unto the Lord, if he neglect the works necessarily appointed unto his vocation.

Here may princes take heed they go not about with liberality to make other men good for them, learned for them, virtuous for them, wise for them, while they themselves neglect study, prayer, pains, praise, and labour; but to know and do all things themselves, which are required for a princely office, by the express word of God. Study, wisdom, knowledge, and exercise are required in the prince himself. Let the bishops and priests beware they go not about to try to please God with masses, diriges, pardons, rites, and ceremonies invented by men. But let them do the

works of their vocation, gravely study, diligently and truly preach the word of God, christianly minister the sacraments, and severely use discipline and correction of hardened men's faults. So let the counsellor see what equity requires him to do, the honour of God, the obedience due to his prince, and the love of his country; and so judge and counsel for the glory of God, and welfare of the realm, and not for his own affection or profit; and think that the parson, bishop or priest is able to sing or say the remission or pardon for the neglecting of his duty; but he must do the works thereof himself. The common sort of people, let them learn to know and obey both God and man, and not trust to the pardon and remission of their ignorance and disobedient treason and sedition, at the parson's or vicar's hand; but they must know and fear both God and God's magistrate themselves.

How fair and religious, good and godly soever the good intention of man appears and shows itself to man, it is plain iniquity before God; as you may see by Saul: who thought God would be pleased with the well-meant fat sacrifice of king Agag's cattle. (1 Sam. xv.) And also he was not only rebuked grievously for his fault, but disinherited also of his kingdom for ever, because he fought with the heathen before Samuel's coming.* (1 Sam. xiii.) I dare pronounce that all these mischiefs and troubles, that happen to our ship and commonwealth of England, spring out of this fountain, that no man labours to do the works that God hath appointed to his vocation.

And the example hereof we have seen in Jonah, whose disobedience and want of doing his vocation, moved the winds in the air, and the waters of the sea; so that he himself, and as many as were on board, were likely to have been drowned. ¶ And seeing there is none of us but is culpable, from the highest to the lowest, in neglecting the works of our vocation, and thereby disobedient to the good will and commandment of God, let us repent and return to a better mind. He that erreth shall not perish, if, being admonished, he return home again. (Ezek. xviii. Matt. xi.) Let this glass and mirror of Jonah suffice us to behold another man's evil in, before we feel the like ourselves. We have seen the disobedience of Jonah and the pain thereof; we have seen his amendment and pensiveness, and the fruit thereof, his deliverance and salvation;

* Rather because he offered sacrifices improperly.

let us also now see how much he profited and learned in God's school under the rod of adversity, and let us learn to do the same. But before we come to the obedience that this man learned in adversity we will pray unto God.

We have come so far as the text has made mention of, to the restitution of Jonah, in life, upon the dry ground. And now follows his second legation and embassage to Nineveh. But for the better understanding of all things that follow, I will divide the chapter into four parts.

The first contains the commandment of God to Jonah: the second, Jonah's obedience: the third, the repentance of the Ninevites: the fourth, the mercy and compassion of God towards the penitent and sorrowful Ninevites.

THE FIRST PART.

The word of God came the second time to Jonah after this sort: Rise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach in it the preaching that I have spoken unto thee of.

Jonah goes not to the city to preach of his own head, but tarries to be called unto it by God: from this we learn, no man should wish or desire any office or vocation for private advantage and his own lucre, but tarry till God call him to it, especially the office of a bishop or preacher.

For that office has so many difficulties, labours, and dangers, that in case the man who is in it is not well persuaded that he is come to it by the calling of God, he shall never be able to endure the troubles annexed to the vocation. The perfect man's tediousness and weariness therein are declared by Jeremiah, who determined with himself to have preached no more because of the malice of the people, and for the contempt that followed him, in doing of his vocation. (chap. xx.) Even so is the office of a good counsellor, or a good magistrate; that in case he look not to come to his dignity and honour for ambition, pride, and private lucre, but comes when he is called of God; he shall find so many labours, and so much unquietness in his vocation, that were it not for God, he could be glad to leave it to another man. For in case the magistrate does any thing contrary unto God, doubtless he shall fall into two evils; first, into God's displeasure, and then what he

does shall never prosper; as it is to be seen by the Israelites that warred before they were commanded by God. (Num. xiv.) Let no man, therefore, run into an office before the time God call him, neither buy himself into the office as is now-a-days commonly used; for I know surely he that buyeth will sell, and never do God, the king, or the subjects, good service, but dishonour the first, and rob the others.

Jonah is bid to rise and go to Nineveh: in that is declared, that of all things in every vocation idleness and sloth must be chiefly avoided, and labours exercised; which, if we leave undone, being works annexed to our vocation, we declare ourselves unfit for the place and vocation we are appointed unto. In case any man had a servant appointed to dress his meat in the kitchen, or to keep his horse in the stable, and who neglected the labours and pains that the offices ordinarily, and of duty, required, who would gladly be contented with such a servant, or desire he should be preferred to any office in his house? Therefore St. Paul commands, "That he that will not labour should not eat." (2 Thess. iii.)

The third instruction from this first part declares, forasmuch as it behoves every man to avoid idleness in his vocation, it might be demanded, what should a man do to satisfy his vocation? This Jonah has told in this place, "Preach," saith the text. It saith not, Take the direction and government of the commonwealth; but preach. Of this we learn, that every man is bound to do the works of the vocation he bears the name of; and not to meddle with other men's labours. It is not the office of the bishop to play the king and lord, nor the king's part to play the bishop. For the king's office is enough for a king, and the bishop's office enough for a bishop. Let them do the best they can, and study each of them in their office. But let the king take heed to be able to judge whether the bishop do true service to God in his vocation by the word of God: and let the bishop do the same; let him take heed whether the king or council command him to do any thing contrary to his vocation, which is to preach God's word; and in case he do, let him, with knowledge and soberness, admonish him, and bring him to a better mind. If thou art a judge, remember thy name, and do the works of right judgment. If a justice, do according to thy name: if a merchant, buy and sell

truly: if any other subject, do according to the name thou bearest, as our subjects of England of late did not at all. For master parson and an old wife taught them to forget the duties of true and godly subjects, and would have made them all kings, but the Lord cast them into the sea. This duty of each man is handsomely set forth by certain pictures in the town-house of Basil in this verse: "*Tu supplex ora, tu regna, tuque labora.*" There are three pictures; the one of the pope, the other of the emperor, the third of a ploughman: and the verse teaches all three their duties—it bids the pope pray; the emperor to reign; and the ploughman to labour. Let, therefore, all bishops and priests know their office is to preach and pray. This, I say, and take God to record, is not of hatred, but of love, for I am afraid of God's threatenings and vengeance towards them, if they amend not; for God saith he will require the blood of the people at the bishop's hand; (Ezek. iii. xxxiii.) and Paul saith, "Woe be unto me if I preach not." (1 Cor. ix.)

Here might the bishop or the parson, peradventure, partly excuse themselves and say: "I know my fault and would gladly amend it, if I could; but I am so old I cannot preach, and never used myself thereunto." I would advise him, then, to follow the doings of Valerius, the bishop of Hippo, who, in his old and latter days, perceiving his age could not satisfy the labours due unto his vocation, associated to himself a companion and coadjutor, even St. Augustine, as he testifieth. (Epist. cxlviii.) In the beginning of that epistle, he writes, "Before all things I would your godly prudence should think that in this, our time, nothing is more acceptable, easy, or more desired of men, than the office of a bishop, priest, or deacon, if their office be slenderly used; but with God nothing is more damnable, miserable, or sorrowful." The same Samuel knew. For, in his age, he instituted his sons to help and ease the intolerancy* and importance of his office: so I would every bishop and parson, that for age or lack of learning cannot do his office, should institute and take unto him some wise and learned preacher to help him, and not a singer, as now is used. If the counsel and doings of the godly men before stated please them not, let them devise some other like it, and all is one to me, so they avoid the wrath of God; for, doubtless, it is

* Weight or burden.

horrible, to fall in this, into the hands of God: for what shall it avail them to win all the world, and lose their own souls? I would likewise pray and admonish the magistrates to see the schools are better maintained; for the lack of them shall bring blindness into this church of England again. And such as are the patrons and givers of benefices, let them take heed they give and bestow them upon worthy men, and sell them not to asses, and blind blockheaded fellows; for if they bestow their benefices for lucre or affection to such as cannot, or will not, feed the people of his cure with the word of God, the patron shall die eternally for it, as well as his blind and naughty curate, parson, or vicar.

The fourth instruction in this first part is very necessary. For when the bishops and priests hear that their office is to preach, then think they, But what we preach, is no matter, it lies in our arbitriment* and pleasure. Nay, saith the text, Preach that I bid thee; and so saith St. Peter. (1 Pet. iv. Matt. xxviii.)

In this vocation of preaching, the preacher should so use himself, that he might say always, My doctrine is not my doctrine, but His that hath sent me. For it is God's word and his law that turn the hearts of people to repentance. (Psal. xix. cxix.) For the written word of God is as perfect as God himself, and is, indeed, able to make a man perfect in all things; (2 Tim. iii.) wherefore, it needs not that blasphemous and vile help of the bishop of Rome, who durst say, The law of God is not of itself wholesome and sufficient but by his interpretation. But by this means he got authority over the scripture to bury it, and establish what he would, were it ever so devilish and heretical; therefore, let such as are of God do as they have in commission from him, and not as they please themselves; for if they do, they are of the devil, and not of Christ.

The obedience of Jonah.

Then Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh, at the commandment of the Lord.

Jonah, being now an obedient servant, looks no more for a ship to flee, but goes the nearest way whither he is commanded, though the journey was painful and dangerous to the flesh. But the cross of trouble is not

* Choice.

unprofitable to the christian: it mortifies the flesh, so that in the afflicted dwelleth the Spirit of God; it exercises the faith, and proves obedience. As David saith, "Well it is with me that thou hast chastened me, Lord, that I may learn thy commandments." Both good and bad are afflicted in this world; but the good thereby are amended, and the evil are appeyred,* and so they perish in their trouble. David was amended herewith. (2 Samuel xii. xxiv.) So was Hezekiah. (Isaiah xxxviii.) So was Daniel. (Dan. ix.) These and like unto them are chastened *in* the world, because they should not be damned *with* the world. The evil are not amended by affliction, but indurated and hardened through their own malice and obstinacy, as Saul and Pharaoh; and their pains and torments here are the beginning of eternal pains. This diversity and contrary effect of persecution, the holy prophet David godly sets forth in Psalm lxxv. Which Psalm I would that all bishops would read that know the truth, and yet will take no pains to set it forth, but live idly; and, also, such as have no learning to set it forth, or of malice silence and secretly hinder the setting forth of it: for, doubtless, at length they shall not only drink of the wine of adversity, but be compelled to drink dregs and all. So shall all the ravening and covetous noblemen, that with injuries and wrongs now afflict the poor—at length they shall be most afflicted themselves. So shall the avaricious judge, the covetous merchant, and the traitorous and seditious subject. But I would that ye be wise in time; and as ye have followed this rebel Jonah in evil, so follow him in the good, and amend—if not, the king's majesty must cast you into the sea.

The obedience of Jonah is set forth and commended with many circumstances, and should, therefore, be the better noted. First, because he went the nearest way to Nineveh, and hired no other, nor substituted a suffragan, nor went to Samaria to ask counsel of his friends what was best to do, but went straightway himself. The second circumstance that is worthy of annotation is, that he did all things as the Lord bade him. Wherein we are taught to be diligent that we see all our doings, acts, and obedience are according to the word of God, and as it bids. There is put in, as though it were by a parenthesis, the description of Nineveh.

* Repressed, overwhelmed.

And Nineveh was a great city to the Lord, of three days' journey.

This description sets forth the obedience of Jonah, who diligently preached through the whole city, the pleasure of God, that it should be destroyed within forty days. The city is called great unto God, that is to say, a very great city, as cedar of God, the mount of God, &c. means; or else, it is called the city of God, for the wonderful respect and pity the Lord had in the saving of it. Whether the city were three days' journey about, or else three days' space to visit all the streets thereof, it is not agreed among all writers; but this we know, it was a notable city, and of most famous report among all cities in the east.

Now follows what Jonah did after he entered into the city.

When Jonah had entered the city one day's journey, he cried and said, Within this forty days Nineveh shall be destroyed.

Of this text we learn, that Jonah lived not idly after he came to the place whither he was sent by God, but that he walked abroad and cried. So should every man that is called to the office of a bishop or pastor. It is not enough to go to his diocese or parsonage, but he must walk abroad there, and proclaim the commandment of the Lord; or else, with all their titles, glory, pomp, and name, they are dumb dogs,* subject unto the vengeance and plague of God. And this is the mark thou shouldest know a bishop and priest by; by his tongue, that soundeth the word of the Lord, and not by his cap, or outward vesture. So should the judge go abroad in his country, and speak and declare justice everywhere; so should the provosts, heads of colleges, and masters of schools, go and teach that which appertains to their place and vocation.

The text makes mention of the sum and principal state of his sermon, that is, that the city should be destroyed within forty days; and that spake he simply and plainly without condition or gloss. Yet may we easily gather of the long time of forty days that was given unto it, that it was reserved unto penance† and amendment of life; and God would rather at this time alarm them to make them amend, than punish them, and lose them for ever, but thus would pierce their minds, and bring them to a knowledge of their sins. And as subversion and destruction

* Isaiah lvi. † Repentance.

were threatened unto Nineveh, so is it to this whole realm. There are among us as great and as many sins (God give grace there be no greater and no more) as there were among them; we must, then, amend, or else we shall every one perish; (Luke xiii.) but at what time the Lord knows, and not I. Now follows how the preaching of Jonah was accepted.

And the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed fasting, and arrayed themselves in sackcloth, as well the great as the small of them.

From this text is first to be noted, how the Ninevites resisted not the preaching of Jonah, when they had many refuges and pretexts, if they would have excused their evil. Their obedience to the word of God condemns both the Jews and us of obstinacy and malice.

First, they might have pretended, 'This Jonah is but one man, therefore, not to be credited.' Second, 'He is a stranger, and speaks this out of hatred unto us, and of affection towards his own country.' Third, 'He is of a contrary religion to ours, and would deceive us from our fathers' faith.' Fourth, 'He is no king, but a man that seems to have little wit,* and less experience.' Fifth, 'He is one contemned by his own countrymen, and cannot be heard by them, and should we credit his words?' Sixth, 'He is a naughty liar, and one that God hates and hath punished, and should we attend to his sayings?' But they remembered their own faults. At the preaching of one day they amended; they looked for no miracle. They pretended not the antiquity and ancientness of their city, which had stood almost from the time of the flood. (Gen. x.) They that heard him never desired their amendment until such time as the king, the priests, and the other elders of the city, had agreed whether Jonah's doctrine were true or not. From this facility and quickness of belief in the Ninevites, we may see that the very infidels sooner believe the word of God, than such as bear the name of God, but are brought up in superstition: and that I think were easy to be seen, if experience should be taken† to preach at Babylon or Constantinople, he should rather convert those cities than Rome. Further, their promptness condemns our obstinacy and hardness of heart, who daily hear the word of God preached, and yet are nothing the better, nor the nearer to salvation.

* Understanding. † A trial should be made.

Then follows what the Ninevites did when they were converted. First, they believed in the Lord; second, they fasted. A man ignorant of God offends in two ways, in body and in soul; and both these offences must be amended, if we will be reconciled unto God. By faith the mind is reconciled unto God, and by abstinence the body is kept in subjection, and the wantonness of concupiscence kept in obedience. But in this our miserable time, accursed of God for sin, there is great question and controversy moved, not only concerning faith, but also fasting; of which two things I judge it is right something should be spoken. As touching faith, it is not an opinion and knowledge only, but a vehement, earnest, and certain persuasion of God's promises in Christ; and out of this faith springs all godliness and virtuous works; and whatsoever springs not hereof is sin. And this faith almighty God confirms in his true and virtuous people two ways, inwardly and outwardly. Inwardly, by the Holy Ghost, who testifies by his Spirit with our spirit, that we are the children of God; outwardly, by preaching of God's word, and ministration of the sacraments. The preaching contains the innumerable benefits and promises of God made in the New Testament and the Old unto us in Christ, who is the seed that should and doth tread and break the head of the serpent. (Gen. iii. John iii.)

The sacraments are as visible words offered unto the eyes and other senses, as the sweet sound of the word to the ear, and the Holy Ghost to the heart. The number of these sacraments in the public ministry of the church is two; one of baptism, and the other of the Lord's Supper; and both these teach and confirm no other thing than that the mercy of God saves the faithful and believers.

Therefore the bread in the holy supper is called the body of Christ, and the wine the blood of Christ, because they are sacraments and seals of God's promises in Christ. This plain and simple doctrine of the sacraments were sufficient, if fraud, guile, treason, heresy, superstition, papistry, ignorance, arrogancy, misery, and the malice of men would suffer it. But these evils have called into question and controversy, whether carnally, corporeally, and really, the precious body of Christ be present; and how the communion and sacrament of his body should be ministered and used: for the resolution and answering

which question, I will sincerely and plainly show my mind according to the word of God.

Of the presence of Christ's body in the sacrament.

I will not in this question say as much as I would or could, because of late days, in this place, it was godly and learnedly touched. But yet somewhat I must say, because the ignorance of it brings idolatry, idolatry brings eternal damnation, eternal damnation comes not only to the ignorant, but also unto him that should in his vocation remove (or do his good will to remove) the ignorance. I am appointed to remove ignorance; therefore, I pray you, hear how you may remove it. First, I will show by many arguments, that there is no corporeal presence of Christ's body in the sacrament; then I will answer to the arguments of the adversaries that would have it there.

The first argument I take of the name of Christ's body, which is like unto ours in all things except sin; (Heb. ii. Isa. liii.) and in case it were not in all things like unto ours, (except sin and immortality,) St. Paul's argument would prove nothing. (1 Cor. xv.) But our bodies are, one to each one, measured certainly with quantity and quality, and occupy at one time one place; therefore Christ's body so doth and ever hath done. And thus would Paul prove our resurrection, because our bodies are as Christ's is, which is risen, except sin and immortality. As to that they say, Christ has now a glorified body, and we have not so, it makes nothing for their purpose; for when Christ made his supper, and instituted the sacrament of his death, he was a mortal and passible man,* subject unto the tyranny and violence of his adversaries: yea, after his immortality he showed manifest tokens and arguments of his pure, true, and sensible humanity,† (John xxi. 1 John i.) for the apostles' fingers touched him. Further, St. Paul saith, that Christ shall make our bodies like unto his glorious body. (Phil. iii.) Therefore, they destroy the true and real human nature of Christ's body that say, his body is in many places at one time, which robs his body of all the qualities, quantities, and properties of a true body. For the scripture of God confesses that Christ's body is but in one place; and many of the popes' canons confirm the same. Thus it is written: "Till the world be ended, the Lord is above; but, notwithstanding, his truth is here with us. The body in which he rose

* Liable to sufferings. † Human nature

must be in one place, and his verity is dispersed everywhere."—*De Consecrat. Distinct.* v.

The second reason is taken out of the nature and condition of a sacrament, which is, That what is remembered by the sacrament itself is absent, and yet the signs or sacraments take the name and denomination of the thing represented and signified by the signs, for a declaration of the thing that is done with the signs.

So is it in all the sacraments of the Old Testament and the New; therefore, also in this sacrament. The thing itself in this sacrament, that is, the precious body of Christ broken, and his innocent blood shed, are absent; yet the bread and the wine are called the body broken, and the blood shed, according to the nature of a sacrament, the better to set forth the thing done and signified by the sacrament. There is in the sacrament the memory and remembrance of Christ's death, which was done on the cross, when his precious body and blood were rent and torn, shed and poured out for our sins.

With this agrees St. Augustine: "If sacraments had not some proportion and likeness of the things whereof they are sacraments, they were no sacraments at all. And thus they take the name rather of the similitude and signification of the thing they represent and signify, and not that indeed they are as they are named." (Boniface, Ep. xxiii.)

So after this manner the sacrament of Christ's body is called Christ's body; and the sacrament of Christ's blood is called Christ's blood; and the sacrament of faith is called faith. As St. Augustine learnedly and godly saith in the same argument, "Let the word come unto the element, and then the sacrament is made." He saith not, Let the word change or transubstantiate the element, (that is to say, the substance and matter of the sacrament,) and then is made the sacrament.

The third reason.—If Christ were here in the sacrament bodily and corporeally, he should every day suffer and shed his precious blood. For the scripture saith, This is my body that is broken for you, and my blood that is shed for you; (Luke xxii. 1 Cor. xi.) but it is not true that he daily suffers pain and passion; (Rom. vi.) no more is it true that he is in the sacrament bodily, for heaven keepeth him till the last day. (Acts iii.) Neither yet is the bread

after consecration his very* body, (1 Cor. xi.) nor the wine his blood; (Matt. xxvi.) but the bread remains still bread, and the wine still wine, after the word spoken, as they were before, concerning their substance, but the use of them is changed.

The fourth reason is, That the scripture makes no mention but of one ascension, and of two comings; one past, and the other we look for in the end of the world, at the latter judgment.

If their doctrine were true, there should be infinite ascensions, and infinite descensions. Further, they cannot themselves tell what is become of the body they feign to have in the sacrament, when the accidents and qualities corrupt and are consumed.

Their gloss upon the canon is, it flieth into heaven; but we say, he was there before. They dare not say it corrupts, nor that it is turned into the substance of our bodies and souls; what is there then become of this body?

The fifth reason is, That if their doctrine be true, then God had made, by this means, his church in danger of idolatry, and subject thereunto. For many chances and cases happen that may hinder the priests from consecrating, and then the people would worship an idol for lack of the presence of Christ's body.

These dangers may chance three ways: in the priest; in the words; and in the matter. The priest, if he be not lawfully consecrated, if he be a heretic, one excommunicated, or a simoniac, he consecrates not. (Magister Sententiarum,† lib. iv. dist. xiii. See the gloss De consecratione, dist. ii. Quid sit sanguis.) In the words of consecration there is no less danger and doubt. First, many of their writers are ignorant with what words Christ consecrated; Johannes, Duns, and Pope Innocent the third, (Libro de officio missæ, part iii. cap. vi. xiv.) say the consecration is comprehended in this word "Benedixi," I have blessed.

Comestor doubts the gloss upon this canon. Utrum sub figura; the glossator interprets these words in the canon of the mass: "Command these things to be carried," as

* Real.

† Peter Lombard, who lived in the twelfth century, and for his skill in scholastic divinity was called the Master of the Sentences.

though they were the words of consecration: which opinion the Master of the Sentences seems to favour in the place aforenamed: "If a heretic," saith he, "would take upon him to usurp this mystery, would God send an angel from heaven to consecrate his oblation?" But howsoever they agree upon the words of consecration, there is yet another rule in their mass-books, that the words must be perfectly pronounced or else they do nothing. How should this be known when they speak them in silence?* Well, grant that they should cry or sing them out, yet so might they still be vain, for there is also required the intention of him that will consecrate. The matter must be such bread and such wine as the gloss speaks of (Dist. ii. Sicut non sanctificando); if which properties are absent nothing is consecrated.

The sixth reason is, If Christ be present corporeally, then shall their sacrifices cease, as St. Paul saith: "Ye shall show the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. xi.) He cometh according to their *belief* and learning; then they should cease from sacrificing.

The seventh reason is, In case they could resolve and answer every one of these reasons, yet could not Christ's body be in the mass; for it lacks the word of God, that is to say, the showing of Christ's death. Further, the mass destroys and dishonours the institution of Christ.

Now for solutions of their arguments.

These I will comprehend all in three points. First, they contend by the authority of the Fathers. The second, by these words of Christ, "This is my body." The third, by the omnipotence of God.

Of the Fathers' authority.—When they are beaten by the authority of God's word, they flee for help to the Fathers' authority. Let them make answer: Is this their opinion? When the priest has spoken these words: "This is my body;" is the substance of the bread presently changed, or does the substance thereof vanish away? I ask the question because they are not fully agreed thereupon, and because it is then said to be the corporeal body of Christ with the same quality and quantity he was born, lived, and died in. So that there hangs in the air, in the priest's hands, the accidents and qualities of bread, without any substance, thus to be honoured there by the people! In what apostle's writing find they this doctrine? Or in what

* To themselves.

man's writings that followed the apostles within one, two, three, four, five, six, or even seven hundred years? If they can show this in any authentic writer in any work that has not been doubted* of, I will believe as they do. But that it may be known unto you that the Fathers were not of their opinions, I will propound unto you certain conjectures.

First, we read not that there was ever any contention about the words of consecration, where they began and where they ended, neither any thing about the minister's intention, to be of such virtue they speak of. The second; the elders never answered the Arians that denied the equality between God the Father and God the Son, thus—Christ is God and equal with the Father, for we so honour him in the sacrament. If the catholic church had so judged of Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament, as the new upstart church does, and has done of late years, then there could not have been a stronger argument against Arius and his heresy.

The third. Neither did the Marcionites ever make such a reason: though Christ seemed to have the qualities and conditions of a natural man; yet he had not them indeed. For, in the sacrament of his body, there seem to be the actual qualities and conditions of bread and wine, yet there is neither bread nor wine indeed, as the papists say.

If this opinion of the accidents, qualities, and sensual† judgment of the bread had been approved and taken in those days for christianity and christian religion, how would this illusion and witchcraft have defended, I pray you, the Marcionite opinion?‡ doubtless nothing more. But Tertullian, against the Marcionites, reasons otherwise, and saith, "Christ of the bread that he took, made his body, saying, This is my body, that is to say, a figure of my body."

The fourth is, They used chalices of wood and glass. (De consecrat. dist. i. Vasa in quibus.) The wooden chalice would soak in the wine consecrated; the glass chalices might soon have broken: if any of them had contained the precious blood of Christ, they would not have used it so temorously.§

* As being interpolated by the papists, which was the case with many editions of the ancient Fathers.

† According to the senses.

‡ The Marcionites held that Christ had no real human nature.

§ Rashly, carelessly.

The fifth is, The sacrament was given to the children in their hands to carry it home with them. (Eccles. Hist. lib. vii. cap. xxxiv.)

The sixth is, No scripture of God, neither doctor of the catholic faith, ever taught that Christ was to be honoured here on earth with candles and bowing of knees.

The seventh is, That in celebrating the supper, they said: "Lift up your hearts," meaning not to have the mind affixed to the signs and elements of the sacraments, but to heaven. Whereof it may be easily gathered that they never thought of a corporeal presence here in the earth.

The eighth is, Origen, upon the book of Leviticus, declares that the remnants and relics of the sacraments were not kept to be honoured, but they were burned. Who would handle his God so cruelly, I pray you, as to burn him like a heretic?

Also, there is a decree in the canon law, Tribus gradibus, which commands the ministers to receive all the relics of the sacrament: and it is the rule of Clement III. that lived anno 1190.

In the mean time I speak no word of that, I should say, wicked question, meet for jugglers, enchanters, and witches, and not for christian men, much less for divines and teachers of God's people—in what moment of time the bread is turned into the body, and the wine into the blood? when the priest speaks these words, "This is my body," if they grant at least these are the words of consecration.

Gabriel Biel (lect. xlviii.) saith that the body is not present whilst this oration is speaking "This is my body;" but "The whole oration must be referred unto the last instance of it." And with this opinion agrees the gloss upon the canon law; (De consecratione, distinct. ii. Cum omne.) It saith that the consecration is made only in the last letter.

And in another canon, (Ante benedictionem,) it is said, "Although the words are spoken one after another, yet the consecration is not made by a little and little; but in one instant (or point of time) the bread is altered in the last moment of the words spoken. According to this their wicked and idolatrous doctrine, the syllable *um* in this sentence, "Hoc est corpus meum," "This is my body," has all the strength and virtue to change and

deify the bread! But I pray you, what syllable is it that changeth and deifieth the wine? for with that these words seem to have more difficulty than the other. But let these illusions and crafts go, and let us cleave to the truth of God's word, and we shall be out of all danger.

But they ask A QUESTION. Thus they say now: If this opinion be neither of the apostles, neither from the ancient doctors, how comes it to be so universally taken, and for so infallible and undoubted a truth; yea, such a truth as in case men forsake all truth, and yet oppose not this truth, they are accounted men most christian and true?

ANSWER. Nothing is more expedient to answer directly unto this question, than to consider the times of our fathers. They thought it best to name the sacraments by the name of the thing that was represented by the sacraments. Yet, in many places of their writings, they so interpret themselves, that no man, except he will be wilfully blind, can say but they understood the sacrament *to signify*, and not to be *the thing signified*;—to confirm, and not to exhibit grace;—to help, and not to give faith;—to seal, and not to win the promise of God (Rom. iv.);—to show what we are before the use of them, and not to make us the thing we declare to be after them;—to show we are Christ's;—to show we are in grace, and not by them to be received into grace;—to show we are saved, and yet not to be saved by them:—to show we are regenerated, and not to be regenerated by them:—thus the old doctors meant.

But when all good learning, and the lessons of the holy scripture, were drowned by the Goths and Vandals in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and yet somewhat rescued and taught again by Charles the Great, A. D. 800, men not acquainted with the phrases and vein of scripture accustomed themselves to the reading of doctors, and left the word of God. Whereof followed, among other evils, that in France, by certain Italians, this question, touching the corporeal presence of Christ's body in the sacrament, was very much, and many times, reasoned upon. Against which error one John Scot, and one Bertram, wrote a book of the same matter to Charles the bald. But the monks and the priests inclined most unto the opinion of the carnal and corporeal presence: whereupon Leo the ninth, a bishop of Rome, A. D. 1050, being a monk, called a council, named Vercellence; which one Lan-

franc ruled as chief president, a monk, and afterwards bishop of Canterbury. He condemned Berengarius: but after the same Berengarius had recanted, one pope Nicholas assembled a council of the monks of Italy and priests, and so compelled Berengarius to a recantation, which you may read. (De consecrat. dist. ii. Ego Berengarius.)*

But here we will pause and deliberate awhile upon this recantation, and scan it a little. In this recantation, mark it, there is no mention made of transubstantiation, but the bread and the wine are called the body and blood of Christ; and it is said that the same are touched with the hands of the priest, broken, and torn with the teeth of the faithful. This sentence is not admitted now-a-days among our scholastic divines; yea, the gloss upon the same canon saith; "There is more danger of heresy in Berengarius's words than was in Berengarius himself."

That recantation of Berengarius the pope sent into all the cities of Italy, Germany, and France. But this religion could not be well accepted, nor judged to be good of all men, though pope Hildebrand, the monk and sorcerer, confirmed it, A. D. 1079. Wherefore they excogitated and dreamed out transubstantiation; which opinion the monks of Benedict's order helped forward in their sermons. And because this new and wicked doctrine of transubstantiation could not be received and admitted by all men; after almost two hundred years, Innocent the third, once a doctor of Paris, confirmed it in the Council of Lateran, A. D. 1215. And that this wicked doctrine might take effect the sooner, he bound men to auricular confession, wherein they persuaded men to what they pleased: immediately afterwards began the begging friars, the very soldiers of antichrist, and fit persons to set forth such abomination. At the beginning of these monsters Honorius III., bishop of Rome, commanded this new bready god to be honoured, A. D. 1226. (lib. ii. Decretal. Tit. De celebra. Missarum.) And then began the pin-folds†

* Berengarius was archdeacon of Angers in the eleventh century. He attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation, then recently advanced by the church of Rome, and was repeatedly condemned by popes and councils, and compelled to recant. He died in 1088, at the age of ninety; and may be considered as having promoted the beginnings of the Reformation by his opposition to the church of Rome, and the popish doctrine of the sacrament.—See *History of the Church of Christ*, cent. xi.

† Pounds.—The pixes and shrines.

and cloisters to be made in the churches to preserve their new god in. And when the monks had farther entered into the consciences of the people, and when they had more inculcated and beaten into men's heads this new article of faith, transubstantiation, than all the articles of our belief in Christ, the pope began to excogitate more yet for the honour of this new god! For when they had brought Christ from heaven to earth again, and so concluded that he should be honoured in the sacrament, they thought it injury to let him be without some solemn feast and day, wherein people might honour him according to their decrees, whereupon Pope Urban IV. instituted the feast that is called Corpus Christi, A. D. 1262. Then the rabble, and number of idolatrous private masses were increased; and the honouring of this bread then was defended with sword and fire.

In the mean time many godly men were sorely afflicted in their consciences, yet they durst not declare their grief; partly for fear; partly because sophistry had blinded part of their judgments. At length the Lord raised up godly men, yea, here in England, John Wickliff, that resisted this new heretical doctrine, in A. D. 1368. And now, the Lord be praised, children know the ungodliness thereof, and may see it plainly to be nought, if they will not be wilfully blind. How childishly they brag of the doctors, now you may see; and even the same do they with the words, "This is my body;" and with the omnipotence of God, as you shall hear in the next sermon.

THE SIXTH

SERMON UPON JONAH.

A continuance of the argument against the popish reasoning upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

They bring forward the words of Christ, "This is my body," against the truth asserting the absence of Christ's body in the sacrament, unto which we answer briefly. The words should be understood according to the matter and purpose for which they were spoken. And every man knows, the matter and purpose that Christ treats of, was to make and institute a sacrament; therefore every word ought to be taken sacramentally: which is to attribute unto the sacrament the name of the thing signified and represented by the sacrament; therefore they should not force or constrain the sound of the words used in the sacrament to make an idol of the sacrament by false interpretation; whereas the true sense of the word makes it out to be but a necessary ceremony, and help to our infirm faith. In the canon law. (Decreta. lib. li. De verbor. significat. tit. xl. cap. vi.), it is written: "The matter should not be constrained to the word, but the word to serve the matter." And (cap. viii.), "When the nature of the word is forced, the meaning of the verity is lost." Farther, what should move them to deny us one figure in these words, where they themselves use a great many tropes and figures; whereas we use but one, and the same one is in the open word of God; and all theirs are without, and contrary to, the word of God. Note, that as to the words of Christ, "Hoc est corpus meum," that is to say, "This is my body," what they should make of the word, "This," they cannot tell, and hitherto they have disputed about it; and as yet are not agreed. (Read, I pray you, Gabriel Biel, Sermon xliv. Et glossam super Canonum, Timorem docet.) "Is," they interpret, "Is made." The bread,

they say, is the accidents* of bread. But in the cup, they are constrained to use a figure as we do. "This cup is the New Testament in my blood:" for they say, it means the wine in the cup and not the cup. They know themselves how fondly† they interpret these words, rather maliciously, obstinately, and falsely, than truly. We therefore thus take them, "This is my body," that is to say, "the sacrament of my body, broken and given for you." Either this is the New Testament; that is to say, the sign of the New Testament, or the remission of sin obtained in the body of Christ, broken and torn for us. St. Augustine (lib. xx. contra Faustum, cap. xxi.) hath these words: "The flesh and blood of this sacrifice, before the coming of Christ, was promised by the sacrifices of similitude. In the passion of Christ they were given indeed; since the ascension of Christ, they are celebrated by a sacrament of memory." And the Gloss. Dist. ii. Tribus gradibus, saith, "It is certain that as soon as the accidents and qualities of bread are broken with the teeth, straightway the body of Christ is taken into heaven." So that their own doctors do not believe that the very body of Christ is received in the sacrament!

If a man then should ask: What faith and opinion should the christian have concerning the presence or absence of Christ's body in the sacrament? Answer. The body of Christ should be considered two ways, first, as it was born of the blessed virgin, being indeed our very natural brother: Then as it was offered upon the cross for the redemption of the world. And as thus offered and put to his sufferings upon the cross, we consider him in the sacrament; for the bread there used is called the body of Christ broken; and the wine the blood-shedding. But the presence of Christ's natural body—or the opinion of his presence,—so little profits, that in reality it rather hurts and harms, as Christ said: "The flesh profiteth nothing;" (John vi.) and again, "It is expedient that I go away."

We must therefore lift up our minds into heaven, when we feel ourselves oppressed with the burden of sin, and there by faith apprehend and receive the body of Christ slain and killed, and his precious blood shed, for our offences: and so by faith apply the virtue, efficacy, and strength of the merits of Christ to our souls, and by that

* Or appearance. † Foolishly.

means quit ourselves from the danger, damnation, and curse of God. And to be thus partakers of the worthiness and deservings of Christ's passion, is to eat the body and to drink the blood; therefore Christ in the vi. of John, takes "eat" for "believe," and "believe" for "eat," so many times. And St. Augustine saith, "Why preparest thou the teeth and belly? believe and thou hast eaten." And whosoever eateth after this manner the body of Christ, and drinketh his blood, hath everlasting life.

Then they object: If we may thus eat the body and blood of Christ without the sacrament, what avails it to have any sacrament? Answer: Against these temptations of the devil, the use of the sacraments was instituted in the church.

The first temptation of the devil is, He would persuade the christian that the promises of God's mercy are false: therefore God confirms them unto us by his sacraments.

The second temptation is, When the devil perceives that we believe the promises of God are true universally, yet would he make us doubt of them particularly, as though they pertained not unto the private or singular conscience of each that is afflicted. That doubt God would remove in us by his sacraments, and saith, They appertain to the private and particular conscience that is afflicted, even to every private man that receiveth the sacraments of the promises.

The third temptation is, The devil labours to take from us the knowledge of the means of our salvation; and how the promises of God are made ours,—by the free grace of God or by our merits.

The sacraments, therefore, which behold and represent only Christ, teach us that the mean of our salvation, is only in Christ. And to put us out of doubt wherewith Christ hath merited for us the promises of God, and this grace of our salvation, the sacrament showeth us it was with and by his death and blood-shedding; and therefore he hath given the name of his body and blood to the signs and elements of the sacraments. So the bread is called the body broken, and the wine the blood shed: admonishing thee that in the receiving of the sacrament, thou shouldest not tarry, nor occupy thy meditations and contemplations in the bread and wine, but in the merits of the body broken and the blood shed. Whosoever marks and

understands these things eateth Christ. If he be ignorant hereof, he is in danger of eternal damnation.

Another objection is, they say: God can do all things, therefore it is not impossible for him to make his body present in the sacrament.

We are not so addicted and given to human reasoning, that we will believe nothing more than reason is able to account and give answer for; but we believe many things that reason saith directly we should not believe—as the incarnation of Christ; our resurrection; the making of the world; three persons in one godhead and one essence; and these things we believe because the express word of God commands us to believe them; but the transelementation* and alteration of the bread, no place of scripture commands us to believe, but many places forbid we should believe. Neither do the papists agree among themselves, what should be the words of consecration; and if we had but that advantage of them only, it were enough to declare that their transubstantiation is no part of God's word.

It is a folly to object the omnipotence of God, without God's word. God neither does, nor can do, more than he will do: they do as foolishly, making mention of a miraculous presence of Christ's body, and declare themselves to be of antichrist by the same means; for he shall deceive the world, yea the very elect, if it were possible, with new miracles. (Matt. xxiv. 2 Thess. ii.) The miracle of Christ's visible ascension, and others expressed in the scriptures of God, are sufficient for the catholic church.† And the miracle of the invisible and miraculous presence, we leave to them that are deceived with the spirit of error. For they would have Christ present, but in any case dumb and without speech—and whilst he lived and could speak, the members of the devil hanged him upon the cross.

Thus was the malice of the devil always great against our Saviour. Before Christ came into the flesh, he made many believe that Christ was come, before the time appointed by the prophets had expired. When he was come indeed, then the devil went about to persuade them he was not come, and was not the Saviour of the world, and never left till he had killed him; because he could not deny but that the very true Saviour of the world was come.

* Change of the elements.

† The truly catholic or universal church, not the Roman catholic.

And now that Christ is ascended and departed from us according to the scriptures, the devil goeth about to do all he can to prove him to be here now. So that neither before his coming into the world, nor at his being corporeally in the world, nor yet being out of the world, he can be in peace, sure and safe from the assaults and temptations of his and our mortal enemy, Satan. But I know how the adversaries of the truth persuade the people maliciously to give no credit to such as preach, and teach the truth. They say, we condemn the holy sacrament, and make it of no estimation. But believe not their slanders and lies, but hear or read our opinion, knowledge, and the godly estimation we have of the sacrament, and then judge and give sentence afterwards. And here receive my opinion as touching the form and manner to celebrate and use the sacraments.

The form and manner how to celebrate the Sacraments.

It were expedient to treat this matter at length if time would serve. But yet in a few words I will say somewhat of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and also of baptism.

Baptism consists in two parts. In the word and the element. The word is the preaching of the good and the merciful promises of God's goodness, accepting us into his favour and grace for the merits of Christ; which promises are briefly comprehended in these words, (Matt. xxviii.) " I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." These words show the form of baptism, and also, that only men, reasonable creatures, should be baptized. (Matt. xvi.) So is condemned the gentility* and superstition that hath been used in the christening of bells.† The matter and element of this sacrament is pure water: whatsoever is added, oil, salt, cross, lights, and such others, are the inventions of men; and better it were they were abolished, than kept in the church: for they obscure the simplicity and perfectness of Christ our Saviour's institution. I pray the king's majesty and his most honourable council to prepare a ship, as soon as may be, to send them home again to their mother church, the bosom and breast of man.

The form how to celebrate the Lord's Supper.—Here

* Heathenism.

† A regular service in the church of Rome. See the Rituale Romanum.

must be marked two persons; the minister, and he that communicates with the minister. These must come and assemble together, as St. Paul saith. (1 Cor. xi.)

The duty and office of the minister.—He doeth best his office, and is best instructed to minister the sacrament, if he, in the ministration thereof, goes as near as is possible to the first institution of Christ and the apostles. For Christ was and is the wisdom of the Father, and the apostles had received the Holy Ghost that brought them into all truth; therefore it must needs follow, their doings and ministration to be most perfect, holy, and religious.

How the minister should prepare himself.—Inwardly and outwardly. The inward preparation is, if his mind and soul are instructed, and furnished with godly doctrine, and a fervent spirit and zeal to teach his audience, to establish them in the truth, and to exhort them to weigh and mark well the merits and deservings of Christ. The outward preparation; the more simple it is, the better it is, and the nearer unto the institution of Christ and his apostles. If he have bread, wine, a table, and a fair tablecloth, let him not be solicitous nor careful for the rest, seeing they are not things brought in by Christ, but by popes; unto whom, if the king's majesty and his honourable council have good conscience, they must be restored again; and great shame it is for a noble king, emperor, or magistrate, contrary to God's will, to detain and keep from the devil or his minister any of their goods or treasure, as the candles, vestments, crosses, altars! For if they are kept in the church as indifferent things, at length they will be maintained as necessary things. When the minister is thus well prepared with sound and godly doctrine, let him prepare himself to the distribution of the bread and wine; and as he giveth the bread let him break it, after the example of Christ. He should give the bread, and not thrust it into the receiver's mouth; for the breaking of the bread has a great mystery in it of the passion of Christ, in which his body was broken for us; and that is signified in the breaking of the bread, which in no case should be omitted: therefore, let the minister break the round* bread; for when broken it serves as a sacrament, and not when whole. Christ broke it. (Matt. xxvi. Mark xiv. Luke xxii.) And St. Paul saith, "The

* The bread in the sacrament was then usually administered in small round cakes or wafers.

bread that we break, is it not the communion of Christ's body?" (1 Cor. x.) Thus should the perfection of Christ's institution be had in honour, and the memory of the dead be left out,* and nothing done in this sacrament that had not God's word to bear it. But, alas, God is accounted a fool; for men can use the sacrament more religiously, devoutly, godly, and christianly, than Christ, God's Son, as it would appear! For his form and manner is put out, and man's device and wisdom is accepted for it.

The duty and office of the people.—The duty of the receiver rests in three parts; that is to say, what he should do before the receiving of the sacrament; what he should do in the receiving of it; and what after the receiving of it. Before the receiving he should prepare and make ready his mind, as the commandment of St. Paul is: "Let the man prove and search himself." (1 Cor. xi.) And this may be done two ways; first towards God, then towards man. Towards God he should, from the bottom of his heart, confess his faults and sins, and acknowledge his just condemnation. Then should he persuade himself, by true and lively faith, that God would be merciful unto him for the death of his dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, done in his body torn, and in his blood shed. He should prepare himself towards his neighbour also. First, in case he has hurt his neighbour in fame or goods, he should reconcile himself again, with restitution of them both again. He that thus prepares himself, eats the body of Christ worthily; and he that does not thus prepare himself, eats nothing but the sacrament to his everlasting damnation. I make no mention here of auricular confession, as though that were a thing necessary to be done before or after the receiving of the sacrament. For this confession is not of God, as their law records. (See the gloss upon the decree of penance, Distinct. v. In penitentia.)

In the receiving of this sacrament, there are things required in the inward man, and also in the outward man. The inward preparation is, when the man receiving the bread and wine, being subjects and matters under the judgment and censure of the senses, the mind is elevated and lifted up into heaven; persuading himself by faith, that the promises and grace of God, through the merits and death of Christ, as truly appertain unto him, as he sensibly and outwardly receives the sacrament and witness

* In the Romish mass there is a prayer for the dead.

of God's promises. And he doubts no more of an inward friendship, familiarity, concord, peace, love, atonement, and fatherly pity and compassion through Christ, by the means of faith, than he doubts that his mouth outwardly receives the signs and sacraments of God's mercies. To excite this faith and belief in the merits of Christ in us, the bread is called his body, and the wine his blood, after the manner and phrase of the scripture.

The outward behaviour and gesture of the receiver should be without any kind of suspicion, show, or inclination of idolatry. Wherefore, seeing kneeling is a show and external sign of honouring and worshipping, and heretofore grievous and damnable idolatry has been committed by the honouring of the sacrament, I would wish it were commanded by the magistrates, that the communicators and receivers should do it standing or sitting. But sitting, in my opinion, were best, for many considerations.

The Paschal lamb was eaten standing, which signified Christ not to be come that should give rest, peace, and quietness. Christ with his apostles used this sacrament, at the first, sitting; declaring that he was come who should quiet and put at rest both body and soul; and that the figure of the passover from thenceforth should be no more necessary; and that men should travel no more to Jerusalem once in the year, to seek and use a sacrament of the Lamb to come, that should take away the sins of the world.

After the receiving it, there should be thanksgiving of all the church for the benefits of Christ's death; there should be prayers made unto God, that they might persevere and continue in the grace of God received: they should help the poor with their alms. This form, methinks, is most like unto the form of Christ and the apostles. How far the mass differs from this, all men know.

I pray God the best may be taken, and the worst left, throughout all the world. And all such as are yet infirm, by reason of long custom and lack of knowledge, let them pray to God, and search the scriptures without affection.* Such as are perverse and obstinate, and will admit no reason, for them the wrath and displeasure of God is ready, and prepared to punish them when he sees it to be time: as it is to be seen by the Corinthians, (1 Cor. xi.) that for the abuse of the supper, many of them fell sick and into

* Partiality or prejudging.

diseases: so will he do with us, if we neglect his most perfect and godly institution.

Let us, therefore, with the Ninevites, repent from our former sins, and believe the remission of them for God's mercy in the deservings of Christ. Further, let us submit ourselves, all our wisdom and learning, unto his word; and think that what Christ and his apostles have instituted and used, can in nowise be bettered by us. And you, my gracious lord and king, restore the right use of the Supper of the Lord, as Josiah did the right use of the Paschal lamb, (2 Kings xxiii. 2 Chronicles xxxv.) according to the word of God.

The text now follows of the fast of the Ninevites. *There was a fasting proclaimed, and wearing of sackcloth, from the greatest to the smallest.*

Here are two things to be noted in the fruits and signs of penitence. First, concerning the fast, and vileness of the apparel; the second, how they fasted from the greatest to the smallest.

Of fasting and sackcloth.—The hypocrites of the world, when they hear of this fasting and putting on of sackcloth, straightway condemn the doctrine of faith, and teach that God saves not only for Christ's sake, whom only faith apprehends. As though faith alone could not apprehend the mercy of God, and yet have fasting annexed with her. But this present text confounds that error; for it saith, The Ninevites first believed the Lord, and then fasted. But lest we should here err, I will speak a little of fasting, that we may love rather to fast well, than obstinately defend a false fast.

What is fasting?—Fasting is the moderate use and taking of meat and drink, lest the flesh should, by abundance, and too much of it, rebel and overcome the spirit. And this fast is used, either continually or at certain times. Continually, when a christian man moderately feeds his body with thanksgiving for necessary nutriment, and not to abound or surfeit. This fasting and abstinence the scripture calls sobriety. (1 Peter v.) The fast at certain times is, also, either private or public. Private, when any man, considering and weighing his own infirmities, binds himself from meats and drinks, to tame and overcome the vehement and lascivious inclinations thereof, to the obedience and rule of the spirit. (1 Cor. vii.) A public fast is when, for a public and common calamity, trouble, or

adversity, the magistrates command a solemn and public abstinence and fast.

But in both these fasts there must be used circumspect and godly diligence, lest we offend in the abuse of fasting, and provoke the wrath and displeasure of God the more against us. We may offend, first, if we fast for any other purpose than to keep the body in subjection to the spirit. Therefore, it is to be taken heed, that we fast not for merit or for custom. The second is, we offend if we fast in honour of any creature. The third, if for one fasting day we make three glutton feasts, as the fashion is for the most part. I would wish, therefore, that the true fast and abstinence were brought in again, and then the Lord would be pleased, I doubt not.

That the Ninevites amended from the greatest to the smallest, teaches us two things. First, of what great efficacy the sermon of Jonah was, so that it pleased all people, both great and small. The like has not been seen; for it is easier for a cook to please an hundred mouths with one meat, than for a preacher to order one sermon or oration, so as to please ten heads. It were well in our time if, at every sermon, one of the magistrates and one of the people were converted; and, at every ten sermons, one bishop and one priest. The second is, the facility and promptness of the Ninevites to believe, and amend their religion and conversation, condemns the ungodly obstinacy and frowardness of such as defer and protract their amendment, and say that they will believe when the king comes to age.

Thus the devil gives them one occasion or other to defer their belief. If the king's majesty and his nobles should hate the truth, they would say, How can we believe the doctrine that our learned and wise magistrates detest? If the king's majesty and his nobles love and favour the best part, they excuse themselves upon the tender and young age of the king; as though his majesty's young age or old age could make any religion of God true or false; when, indeed, all ages and powers are, or ought to be, subject unto the religion and law made already, and given to be observed of and by all men, of what sort, condition, or state soever they are.

These tidings came to the king of Nineveh, who arose from his seat, throwing off his apparel, and clothed himself in sackloth.

It is not without a singular counsel of the Holy Ghost that this king is mentioned so fully; neither his behaviour nor doings after his conversion are so diligently manifested. First, the text sets forth the manner of his conversion, and saith, He returned unto God upon the fame and rumour of Jonah's preaching. Wherefore we learn how much the truth ought to be esteemed, seeing that a king, upon the report thereof made by his people, embraced, and resisted not, as now we see many times done by the greatest part of the world. Even so did Josiah. As soon as he, being yet but a child, heard of the true book of God, he embraced it. (2 Kings xxii.) So did David and Jehoshaphat hear and attend to the admonitions of the prophets. All kings, therefore, and magistrates, should hearken unto the truth, and learn it themselves out of the law. (Deut. xvii.) But the bishops, priests, and others hinder this study and knowledge of God's law in princes and kings; telling them that it appertains not to their office to study and labour in the word of God, but the judgment and study thereof is to be committed unto them: and so they persuade and cause princes many times to persecute the truth and verity by ignorance, as the kings of Israel did who burned the writings of the prophets.

But, most gracious king, and ye, my lords of his most honourable council, ye have not only heard the rumour and fame of God's word, but with your own ears have yourselves heard the truth, and ye credit and believe the same; therefore, in all things express and believe it in fact.

And, most gracious king, take you heed that the virtues you learn and are brought up in, in youth, you practise and exercise them in age; and in case your majesty will so do, beware of one thing—the poison of flattery, which your majesty may use as a good medicine; and it is not a poison, if you take heed of it. It will be poison, if your grace think yourself to be at all times, as flatterers will tell your highness you are; it will be a medicine, if your majesty study to be the same indeed which flattery commends. Your majesty may see an example hereof in king Joash, who, in his youth, favoured and set forth the truth, but in his older days he fell from it, by means of flatterers, who deceived him.

But your majesty shall do best to follow this godly king

of the Ninevites, and embrace continually the word of the living God; and thus shall your grace be better able to do, in case your highness would have before you every Sunday one sermon, which should bring much knowledge and grace into your highness' court.

Now follows the fruit of this godly king's penitence. First, he rises from his seat, and putteth on sackcloth. Of this we learn, that in faith and true repentance there is no diversity between the king and a mean subject: and thus shall it be at the latter judgment; the rich, the poor, the king, the subject, the bishop, the priest, all shall appear naked before the throne of Christ; and be holpen nothing there by any title or name of glory. Here honour and riches have their estimation and glory. Let all men, therefore, look to amend their faith and living here in this world.

As for this external putting on of sackcloth, it was the manner at that time so to do, and declared their repentance and amendment; and so I would it were now, that he who offends in apparel should remove the pride thereof, and go soberly; and the same with him that offends in meat should use more sobriety. Yet no man should think any holiness to be in the external vestment, nor yet any hurt or condemnation in the meat; but the abuse of both displeases God. As for the vestments of the priest in the ministry,* I would wish the magistrate to remove them, for they either show or do not show virtue. If they show not, they use them in vain; if they declare and show virtue, either the virtue is with them indeed, or absent. If he that wears them has the virtue, why does he show it to the world? If he has not the virtue, then he is a hypocrite, whom God hateth.

The other fruit of the penance of the king with his council, being converted to God.—There was a proclamation made through all the city of Nineveh by the commandment of the king and his council.

In this proclamation, first, must be marked who were the authors of this proclamation; then, what was contained in the proclamation. The persons were the king and the nobles of his realm. In these persons first note, that the king's officers, and the peers of the realm, are to cleanse their commonwealth from false religion by public and

* Hooper here refers to the popish vestments, which then were not wholly put away. See p. 183, 188.

open proclamations. So did Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and Cyrus, kings of most notable fame; therefore Christ calleth the princes, the nurses of the church. And so, I doubt not, most gracious king, but your highness will, according to your title and style, cleanse this church of England to the purity and sincerity of God's word.

Further, we learn, that the princes and counsellors of a realm should help forward the godly purposes and statutes made for the glory of God within the realm. So was this king's godly purpose holpen by his council; so David, so Josiah. By the king and his nobles confirming the doings of his people, we learn that godly magistrates should not hinder, but further and confirm all the godly purposes and virtuous study of their people, when they study amendment of false religion: so did Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

The sum of the proclamation.—It contains the true and right form of repentance that pleases God, which is contained in four parts. First, in outward signs of heaviness. Then, in calling upon the Lord. Thirdly, in leaving the wicked and accustomed evil life. Fourthly, in the trust and confidence of God's mercy. Of these parts we will speak somewhat in order.

Of the external signs of a penitent heart.—Two notes of penance are here described. The one, abstinence from meat, the other, neglect and vileness of apparel; for, as natural men say, contraries are cured by contraries. He that is given to his body, cannot please God by penitence, except he come to a soberness; neither the proud and arrogantly apparelled, except he remove the excess and abuse thereof. I would exhort, therefore, as many as exceed and offend in these two, to return to penitence with the king and people of Nineveh. If they would so do, they should not only find grace at God's hand, but also more health and soberness of body, more riches in the coffer, more plenty in the realm, more grace, wit,* and soberness in their household.

That the beasts were tied up from their meat, declares that the king and people had too much delight in wanton and over much gayness of their beasts, which, being kept out of their accustomed pride, should not allure them from their penitence, nor give them occasion to return again to the former evil.

* Understanding.

Further, it pleases the Lord to punish that which allures man's frail nature to sin, because the sin of man should the better be known. As we see by the killing of the levitical beasts that never offended, God would preach unto man, that his sin deserved present and sudden death. So the Lord punished and cursed the earth, that Adam and his posterity might know that the transgression of God's commandment was not a light thing. (Gen. iii.) So do all creatures weep and mourn, until the time of the revelation of the children of God. (Rom. viii.) And thus destroyed he the beasts with man in the flood. (Gen. viii.)

The second sign was.—Lest men should think that the abstinence from meats, or the casting off of gay apparel on certain days, would deserve and merit this favour and mercy of God, it is said in the proclamation that they called continually upon the Lord. That is to say, they asked fervently and continually for help and favour of God.

Note in the conversion of this king, he commands not now to call upon strange gods, but upon the one true and living God. Even so should we do in the days of our trouble, according to the commandment of God, and the example of all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. But this is to be noted that the text saith, they should call strongly upon the Lord; that is to say, with a penitent heart that is sorry for the evil, and willing to study for ever after to do good. We call earnestly upon the Lord, two ways: the one, when we ask of God to turn and keep his wrath and displeasure from us; the other, when we desire him to take from us, and give us grace to preserve us from the sins that provoked and merited his displeasure and wrath.

But we offend in this respect two ways. First, men call upon creatures. Second, they call coldly and unfaithfully, without an earnest mind to amend, and without faith upon the promises of God, for Christ's sake. So did Saul rather call to God to avoid pain, than for any love he had to virtue. For some, as soon as the pain is removed, return again to their old iniquity, as Pharaoh. (Exod.)

The third note of penance is.—Every man turned from his wicked ways, and from the fraud and guile which they used before. This is the third property of penance, without which we are rather hypocrites, than penitent christians. And the property is this, to forsake all evil, and fleshly

studies, and apply to virtue and godliness. Note first that the text saith; "Every man turned." If the king offended, the council, the bishop, the parson, the parish priest, every one amended—so let us do except we will perish—And what shall we do to turn from us the wrath of God, which is kindled and inflamed? Shall we do so by any man's merits and deservings? No, saith the text, but every man amend for himself; and so concludes Isaiah lviii. and Jeremiah vii. And because avarice, as St. Paul saith, is the mother and root of evil, the proclamation of the king of the Ninevites is, that they should leave their rapine, violence, and oppression, and make restitution of the falsely gotten goods. Here let all men learn how to be saved, who have gathered together, they care not whether with or against the law, with or against charity.* Let them leave doing this violence and oppression, and restore again all falsely gotten goods, or else they will surely perish. So did Zaccheus, (Luke xix.), and other godly men and rich men that repented. Let men look upon that wise saying of Solomon: "Spoil not the poor, neither oppress the afflicted in the gate. For the Lord will take upon him the defence of his cause." (Prov. xxii.)

The fourth fruit of penitence, is, *Who can tell whether God will be converted, and moved with pity, and turn from the fury of his wrath, that we perish not?*

In this text we see that to turn and bow the anger and displeasure of God is a great matter; and that to afflict the body with fasting, to pray, and to change the old wicked life is very needful to win his favour; but all these things are in vain, except there be likewise a confidence, and true faith in the mercy of God. And this is that which God most delights in—when the sinner confesses that he is merciful for his promises' sake in Christ, and not for the worthiness† of his penance. So does this king at the end of his proclamation set forth the mercy of God to his people, whereby both he and they are saved.

Although his oration seems to have a doubt in it, yet, notwithstanding, he was very well persuaded of God's mercy. For as Jonah set forth nothing but God's wrath, he makes mention of his mercy. The doubt he puts either to put away the sluggardness of his people, or to declare in himself the fight and battle that is always

* Christian love.
† Not for any deservings.

between the spirit and the flesh about God's promises. We may say also that in desiring worldly things of God, we should ask them with a condition. (Matt. viii.) We may learn here to put away despair, and trust to the Lord's mercy, although he threaten our destruction ever so much; also, here princes may learn what proclamations they should make in setting forth religion, even such only as extend to the glory and mercy of God in Christ.

How the people accepted this proclamation, I will show in the next sermon.

THE SEVENTH

SERMON UPON JONAH.

The Text.

And when God saw their works, how they turned from their wicked ways, he repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them, and did it not.

You have heard how this mighty king, at the preaching of Jonah, corrected both his faith and manners. And how, by public proclamation, he willed all his subjects to do the same. From this act of the Ninevites, we may learn that it is our duty to obey all good and virtuous commandments, proclamations, and decrees of princes, whenever they command amendment of religion and manners. But our people, and especially the multitude of priests, are otherwise affected: for they disobey both God and their king. It were a charitable way if they have any thing to object against the reformation which the king's majesty and the council godly intend, that they should bring forth arguments, and not force and violence of armour.*

God therefore sees, that is to say, approves their works; not because they were clothed in sackcloth, but because they turned from their wicked ways; that they had changed their false religion, and restored the goods again they had taken from their neighbours by violence and extortion, and every man walked in his vocation. And even as the Lord pitied them, so will he pity us if we amend our faith and conversation, and live in our vocation accordingly. (Isa. lviii. Ezek. xviii.) But if we hate not the evil we have committed, from the bottom of our hearts, we tarry still in death.

That God repents the evil he purposed to do to the Ninevites, teaches us, that all the threatenings of God are conditional, that is to say, to fall upon us if we repent not of our evil deeds. This is godly showed (Jer. xviii.),

* There had been several insurrections a short time previously, instigated by the Romanists.

in these words: "I will speak quickly against the people or kingdom, to waste and destroy them. If that people (against whom I have devised) convert* from their wickedness, immediately I repent of the plague, that I devised to bring upon them." The same may you see, Ezek. xviii. Zech. i. "Turn unto me saith the Lord, and I will turn unto you." Yet God should not be accounted inconstant, though he punish not as he threatened; for this is his nature that cannot be changed, to receive penitent sinners into grace. (Ezek. xviii. Matt. xi. John iii. v.) The heresy and false doctrine of the Catharones† that deny mercy and remission of sins to sinners, is damnable and naught.

The fourth Chapter of Jonah.

The Argument.

The sum of this chapter is; that God will show mercy unto penitent and sorrowful sinners, yea, though all the world would say nay. This mercy God declares in this chapter, not only with words, but also with a metaphor and similitude of a tree.

It is divided into two parts. The one contains how Jonah was angry for the mercy and compassion God took upon the penitent Ninevites, wherefore he is reprehended by God. The second part contains how Jonah, being in the fields, was taught of the Lord by a tree that suddenly grew up, and suddenly perished again, that he did wrong to be angry with God's doings towards the Ninevites; and declares further, that he could do no other than save them.

Therefore Jonah was sore discontented and angry; and he prayed unto the Lord, and said, "O Lord, was not this my saying (I pray thee,) when I was yet in my country? Therefore I hasted to fly rather to Tharses. For I knew well enough that thou art a merciful God, full of compassion, long suffering, and of great kindness, and repentest when thou shouldest punish."

Of this text we learn, first, how horrible and wicked the perverseness of our nature is, seeing that Jonah, I cannot tell upon what love towards himself, is angry; and that not with man, but with God, who would favour the

* Turn.

† If Hooper here refers to the Cathari, it is evident that he was prejudiced respecting them by the slanders of the Romanists, who thus misrepresented their objections to conformity with the world. See History of the Church of Christ, cent. xii. ch. 3.

sorrowful Ninevites in mercy. Seeing there was such imperfection and infirmities in the holy saints, how much need have we to see what lieth in us miserable and wretched sinners!

Out of this text, also, we learn what difficulty and hardness there is in the office of preaching, if it be truly and well done. Whether it happen and come to pass as he speaks; or it come not to pass, the preacher continually stands in danger of obloquy and contempt. We may see an example hereof in Jonah, who, by the word of God, preached the destruction of Nineveh: which, if it had come to pass, they would have called Jonah a cruel tyrant and seeker of blood. And now that he sees the city spared, he fears that he should be accounted a false prophet; not only among his own countrymen the Israelites, but also among the Gentiles, and then all his preaching would be taken for a mockery. This contempt Jonah feared sorely, and was therewithal so troubled, that he offended God grievously. I may accommodate the same unto myself and others right well when we speak for a reformation of the church, schools, and policies;* when we wish such ministers to be put into the church as can and would teach the doctrine of the apostles, and that they should not be known by their vestments and shavings, but by their doctrine. Then such as would minister the sacraments gravely, religiously and simply, as Christ and his apostles did; in baptism, nothing to be used but the words, and the simple and bare water; in the supper of the Lord, to use the ceremonies and rites of Christ and his apostles, and all occasions of superstition to be avoided. But although this doctrine be as true as Christ and his apostles, yet I perceive displeasure and great enmity rise hereupon to me and to others; yea, not only unto us that are subjects, but also unto the king's majesty and his most honourable council. But the Lord keep us out of temptation, and give grace and strength to do all things to the glory of God, and to pray for our enemies; and, as touching schools, especially the universities, they must be amended, and good heads and rulers appointed to the colleges, or else the word of God will be hindered always by such as ought the most to set it forth. Such godly men as have wherewithal, should help and promote schools to bring up youth everywhere through

* Governments.

this realm; and then should godly and learned children occupy the place of superstitious and ignorant men; wherewith this realm of England is sorely and too much, may God amend it, pestered and hurt. This, bishops might help well in their dioceses, if they intended as much good as they report to the world; and bestow some part of their excess upon the towardly youth of their dioceses. So ought the nobility and our worshipful men of the shire to do; yea so ought every parson and curate, either with his goods to help forth the truth and old catholic faith of Christ, or with their goodwills animate them to learn the doctrine of the patriarchs, prophets, and the apostles: and such as have the talent of teaching might rather teach than play; help than hinder; build than pull down; help forth than draw back; promote God rather than the devil; favour Christ than antichrist; and agree with the king rather than conspire with the pope. As concerning the policies* and the reformation thereof; I have said my mind before. God give grace that it may be accepted and followed; if it be not, yet I have delivered my soul, and God shall require your blood at your own hands. And in case any man is offended with me for my true saying, I had rather have displeasure of all the world, than of God, who is able to damn both my body and my soul.

In the third place, Jonah gives an excellent description of God, which we should well keep in mind—that he is a pitiful and merciful God, long suffering and of much clemency; this description of God agrees with God's own words spoken to Moses, (Exod. xxxiv.) the which encouraged Jonah, and would do the same to us if we were of God. Great, doubtless, was the sin of Jonah, who took an occasion to be angry by God's favour and goodness towards this sorrowful city; even thus did the Pharisees, who were angry at Christ, because he kept company with sinners. Jonah was then, as many men are now-a-days, who think that wretched sinners should never find pardon for their sins before God. Now follows a further description of Jonah's fault and impatience.

And now, O Lord, take my life from me, (I beseech thee,) for I had rather die than live.

From this text we learn two things; first, how sorely and heinously Jonah offended, who rather desired to die, than God should have pity upon these penitent people, by

* Government of the church and state.

whose preservation he thought some shame and rebuke should happen unto him; because he before had spoken and threatened their perdition and loss.

Much better, and more godly, did Moses and Paul, who wished their own harm, rather than the loss of the people. Also, this text declares the weariness and impatience of the flesh, which will not suffer the troubles annexed unto the vocation, but rather wishes to die than live: so did Elijah desire death (1 Kings xix.): so that the text and experience daily shew that the best day a true preacher shall see is the day of his death. But as the devil has used the vocation of bishops and priests in this present time, there is no day so terrible or fearful to them as the day of death. The cause thereof, methinks, St. Augustine (Episto. cxlviii. ad Valerium) shows right well: "Before all things I desire that your godly prudence would think nothing to be more light, easy, or joyful, in this life, chiefly now at this time, than the office of a bishop, priest, or deacon, *if* the thing be done lightly or hypocritically; but before God there is nothing more miserable, sorrowful, and damnable."

Then follows the answer of God to this angry man.

Then said the Lord: Art thou so angry?

By this demand and question of the Lord, we learn how he, in a hasty passion, if a man may speak so of God, will not cast away this infirm and weak Jonah: but with sufferance he trained him to a better and more advised judgment.

So does Isaiah report of God's nature: (chap. xlii.) "He will not put out the kindled tow." He did not only consider the weakness of the man, but also the dangers and trouble of his pastoral vocation. God, therefore, bore mercifully with him, and schooled him to a further and better knowledge. From this man we may learn how to beware of hasty and rash passions of wrath; for if there be not in all our acts a moderation thereof, we shall never do, nor judge things uprightly according to knowledge. If men would remember this demand of God to Jonah, they would not be so angry when they are rebuked for their faults, but rather thank the admonisher for his good admonition and warning of God's displeasure. Now follows the second part of the chapter.

And Jonah gat him out of the city, and sat down on the east side thereof, and there made him a booth, and

sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what should chance unto the city.

When Jonah had no excuse to make why he was angry, and would not confess his fault, for he answered nothing to the question God demanded of him; he went out of the city to see the end; whether the Ninevites would persevere in the penance they had begun or not. Of this we learn; if we be wrongfully angry and admonished, if we will not confess the fault, yet should we consider and weigh it the more deeply. In his making himself a booth, we see with what simplicity the good man was contented, and likewise how he himself was content to labour to make his own couch. Our bishops and priests have all things prepared to their hands, God give them grace better to deserve it. The text saith:—

The Lord God prepared a wild vine which sprang up over Jonah, that he might have shadow above his head, to deliver him out of his pain.

The Lord here purposes to help the infirmities of Jonah, and remove the sinister and false judgment he had of God's mercy, by the image of a young tree. He bringeth forth a young tree that may give shade to Jonah, whereof Jonah rejoices very much. But the Lord killed it again, and that speedily made Jonah angry. In the midst of his anger the Lord, by a comparison and similitude between the simple tree and the great city of Nineveh, showed Jonah his fault in that he was angry for the mercy showed unto the city. But in these are things to be marked. First in Jonah; then in God; thirdly in the tree.

In Jonah may be seen the image of a man that labours and is oppressed with many affections, and never contented with the doings of God. We should not follow this fault, but submit our judgments to his will: saying always, and in all God's works, "Thy will be done," whether thou send us mirth or sorrow, joy or pain,—for every thing shall be to the best unto those that love the Lord. Jonah also, in his perverse and froward opinion to withdraw the mercy of God from the Ninevites, expresses the evil opinion which saith, that sinners can never be received into grace, after they fall once from the Lord. They would abrogate the greatest work of God, to say his mercy should not work where it pleaseth him, but where man's fancies please to appoint it. The Lord not only favours and bears with Jonah's infirmities, but also covers

him from the burning and heat of the sun; and also teaches him by the tree, that he is offended without cause. What tree this was it is not agreed upon yet among writers; but it makes no matter; it is enough we know it was a tree with broad leaves, whereby the Lord would succour both the body and knowledge of the infirm Jonah. In that it grew up suddenly, and withered away suddenly, it bears the image and property of such honours, riches, and treasures as are in this world; which suddenly rise and suddenly fall again. No man, therefore, should hazard or endanger his soul for such brittle and frail things.

And by the withering away of this little tree, God would show Jonah how uncharitable he was in being angry that the great city of Nineveh was saved: as though he had said, If it grieve thee so much for the loss of this little tree, should it not be a greater grief unto thee to see the destruction of so great a city? For the tree sprang up in one night, and the city had stood many hundred years. Again, for the tree Jonah had not laboured, but God builded Nineveh. The tree is but one thing, the city had a great number both of men and cattle: and lest Jonah might have said, Yea, but all the men of the city are evil, and therefore deserve to perish; God adds to the matter and saith: there were in the city about an hundred and twenty thousand persons that knew not between the right hand and the left; that is to say, children and simple persons.

From this dialogue between God and Jonah we may gather this general and universal doctrine, that God will save all penitent sinners (1 Tim. ii.); for seeing he gave his only Son for us, whilst we were yet his enemies, how should it be that he would not in him give us all things? (Rom. viii. Matt. xi.) But hereof comes our loss and perdition, that we repent not from our evil ways, as the proclamation of the king of Nineveh commanded the people and subjects thereof. He would not only that men should amend their evil lives, but also that they should restore again all falsely gotten goods, and make restitution thereof, as well to God as to man. Restitution towards God is, when all honour and glory is given unto him, as St. Paul saith. (1 Tim. i.) But this glory is and hath been taken from God by men of every sort, as well by those of the ecclesiastical policy as those of the civil

policy.* Those of the ecclesiastical policy take away this honour and praise from God two ways; one by neglecting the true, the other by defending of false doctrine. By negligence, such offend as know God and his ministry by the holy word of God, yet, for private respects, either for lucre, or fear for themselves, suffer many tokens, monuments, and ceremonies of superstition; as the diversity of meats for religion's sake (yet I approve the commandment of the magistrates who, for a civil policy, cause certain days appointed to eat fish in†); images; forbidding of marriage in Lent; the use of such vestments as obscure the ministry of Christ's church, and represent the form and fashion of the Aaronical ministry of the old law, abrogated and ended in Christ.‡ Those also offend who seldom, or never, teach the people, nor procure them to be taught. All these I exhort to make restitution, or else doubtless their theft will bring them to damnation. Let them preach the word of God truly, and minister his sacraments according to the institution of Christ; and then their harm done in times past, shall not be thought upon.

There is another sort, who refuse not only to make this satisfaction, but also obstinately maintain and defend false doctrine, and study to oppress the true doctrine: of this sort there is no small number; but those I exhort also to leave their evil sayings, and to make restitution.

Many who are of the laity, as they are called, that is to say, not of the public ministry of the church, also rob God of his glory and honour: they seek remedy for sin by other means than through the death of Christ, as by the merchandise§ of masses, indulgences, invocation of saints, the pains of purgatory; but I advise them to give God that, for it appertains only unto him. Hearken unto the word of God, and call upon his name, as he teaches, through Christ, in spirit and verity; and thank him for all his gifts, which he gives both to your body and soul. At your death commend your souls to him, as St. Stephen did, (Acts vii.) for Christ, who died under Pontius Pilate. And do not doubt of the dead, for they are at rest already, either in heaven or in hell (John iii. v. 1 Cor xv. 1 Thess.

* Clergy and laity.
‡ The popish vestments.
† To encourage the fisheries.
§ Sale and purchase.

iv. Rev. iv.) : wherefore rather give thanks to God for them, than pray for them.

Of restitution to be made to man.—In external goods a man may offend three ways. In evil getting of them ; in evil keeping of them ; and in evil spending of them.

They are evil gotten many ways : first, when they are taken from another by murder, rapine, violence, craft, or theft. Thus queen Jezebel offended in taking away Naboth's vineyard ; (1 Kings xxi.) at length she was torn with dogs for her labour. Then they are evil gotten by subtleties, frauds, corruption of laws, by lying, flattery, and such other means : let every man make restitution of goods thus gotten, or else he shall surely perish. Let the seditious, hurtful, and dangerous traitor, that, contrary to God's laws, takes weapon against his liege lord and king, restore both his heart and his goods again, to the king's pleasure and commandment. Let all men cease from getting their goods by these unlawful means ; and the goods so gotten let them restore again, as Zaccheus did. (Luke xix.) And that they may be the better fenced against this unlawful and ungodly getting together of goods, I pray them to read the canon* of St. Paul ; " Such as will be rich," &c. (1 Tim. vi.)

Goods are evil kept, first, if they exalt the owners unto arrogance and pride, which brings contempt of others : and then, if, in the abundance of goods, thou forget God : thirdly, if having goods thou cease from labour, and put thyself to ease, so that thou make thyself profitable neither to God, nor to the commonwealth thou dwellest in. Herein offend very sorely and dangerously such as possess the goods of the church, and preach not ; such as have stipends to teach, and teach not ; wages to war, and war not ; who receive for a thousand soldiers, and serve not with five hundred ; such as enjoy hospitals, almshouses, and the provision of the poor for their own private advantage. To all these I say, Repent ye, and make restitution.

Goods are evil spent, first, if they be consumed in an evil manner : as when they are applied to pride and excess in apparel ; or meat and drink, to the oppression and hurt of the poor ; or to maintain a great company of idle and

* Rule.

loitering men: then if they be not used to a good use, to the edifying of Christ's church, the help of the poor, the prisoners and such like: for, in the latter judgment, the Lord shall ask what care and charge we had of the poor (Matt. xxv.); and we see the rich man was damned because he gave not to Lazarus. (Luke xvi.) Unto those also I say, Repent ye, and spend the gifts of God according to knowledge and virtue; if you will not, you shall all perish. (Luke xiii.) God sleepeth not, but seeth all our acts and noteth our doings.

In case any of these men, whether they are of the ecclesiastical policy, or of the civil policy of this your realm, most gracious king, and you, my lords of his most honourable council, draw back, and will not make restitution, nor use their goods well, by the office you have taken from God you are bound to compel them to do it. And first of all, because there is no man that sinneth not, look first unto yourselves, and then, with the king of Nineveh, and the nobles of his realm, repent ye, and restore unto God that which is God's, and unto man that which is for the comfort of your subjects—good laws and diligent execution and usage of the same. Then compel both the spiritualty, as they are called, and also the temporality, to make restitution to God and man. And now the Lord has given you peace that you might have leisure to do these things, as Paul saith. (1 Tim. ii.) Do, therefore, as Solomon did. (1 Kings viii.) Abuse not the peace in playing sports and pastime, but in the building of God's temple, which has a long time lain desolate: you have an example in Numbers v.; and in any case let that example be followed. There are the acts of Jehoshaphat, the king, written (2 Chron. xvii.), in which are three notable things. First, he took away and removed idolatry from his people; secondly, he gave them true judges, whose godly conditions are written in the same book, (chap. xix.) who feared the Lord, and accepted no persons in judgment, and they received no bribes nor rewards; thirdly, he placed and appointed priests, not in one place, but in all the cities of Judah; and not that they should play and pastime, and teach every thing but the law of God. All these things must you do, most gracious king, and you, my honourable lords of his high and wise council, if you will live in peace and quietness. I do not exhort your majesty, nor your most honourable council

lightly, but upon great and weighty consideration, to remove all these things, that are either the devil's or man's invention.

For, in the scriptures, I find that God, many times, is offended when we give him but half honour. How well began Jehu, the king of Israel (1 Kings x.): but, because he remained in the sins of Jeroboam, his kingdom was not only divided, but at length destroyed also. Abolish, therefore, godly king, all iniquity, and permit not mass, nor such abomination, to any man within your highness's realm; no, not to the strangers, which, doubtless, should be an occasion of slander to your realm and subjects. For Asa, the king of Judah (1 Kings xv.), removed his mother from the rule and governance of the realm because she had an idol in a grove, which her son, the king, burnt. Then your majesty must institute true, faithful judges of good conscience: then send such priests through your realm that have these two conditions: first, that they teach; then, that they teach the word of God. If your majesty do these things, then shall God send peace and quietness according to his pleasure. Further, God shall make you a fear and terror to foreign and strange nations that know not the living God.

And this, your majesty shall avoid the better, if you beware of flatterers, and think as Jehoash, in his youth favoured the truth of God, and in his age, by flattery, departed from it (2 Kings xii.); so the same evil and danger may corrupt your highness. Then, if it may please you to command more often to have sermons before your majesty, it will not be a little help to you, if they are well made, well borne away, and well practised: and seeing there are in the year eight thousand seven hundred and sixty hours, it shall not be much for your highness, no, nor for all your household, to bestow fifty-two of them in the year to hear the sermons of God. If your majesty do these things, the blood of your people shall not be required at your hands. But I counsel both king and council to be admonished, and to amend things amiss: if not, the king of Nineveh, with his people, shall rise at the latter day, and condemn both king and council; for they converted* at the preaching of one man; yea, at the preaching of a stranger: we

* Repented.

have not only heard the same by the mouth of strangers, but also by the mouth of our own countrymen, and that many times. Let us, therefore, believe and amend, or else we must perish.

God preserve, for the death of Christ, the king's majesty, all his honourable council, with the whole realm. Amen.

FINIS.

THE GLORY BE TO GOD.

A

GODLY CONFESSION AND PROTESTATION

OF

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH,

MADE

BY JOHN HOOPER.

WHEREIN IS DECLARED WHAT A CHRISTIAN MAN IS BOUND TO BELIEVE OF GOD, HIS KING, HIS NEIGHBOUR, AND HIMSELF.

A. D. 1550.

The heart believeth to justice, confession by the mouth is to salvation. Rom. x.

A

GODLY CONFESSION AND PROTESTATION

OF

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

DEDICATION.

To the most virtuous and mighty prince Edward the sixth, our most redoubted sovereign lord, king of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, and in earth, next and immediately under God, the supreme head of the churches of England and Ireland: and also to the most wise, godly, and honourable lords of his highness's privy council, and unto the rest of the most wise, godly, and learned assembly of all the honourables and others, appointed to be of his majesty's most high and godly court of parliament: John Hooper, his most humble, loving, and obedient subject, wisheth all grace and peace from God, with a long, godly, and most prosperous reign over us, in all godly knowledge, honour, health, and perpetual felicity.

The wise man, Cicero, most gracious and mighty prince, saith, that not only he does wrong, who, by violence, oppresses another man wrongfully; but also he that prevents not, if it lie in his power, the wrongs offered, and he is no less faulty than though he had forsaken parents, friends, or country. This doctrine he practised in defence and propulsing* the injuries and wrongs attempted wrongfully against Milo by the friends of Clodius, as appears by his eloquent oration made for that purpose in the senate of Rome. The same kind of injuries other godly men, in the scriptures of God, have always, according to the law, eschewed;† for it is written, "If a man see his neighbour's ass fall under his burden, or his ox to go astray, his neighbour is bound to help them both, the ass from

* Opposing. † Avoided.

its burden, and the ox from its straying." Abraham practised the same when he perceived his nephew Lot oppressed with the wars of the infidels, he propulsed and avenged the injuries, and set his nephew at liberty.

Even so there are two sorts of people, who, two sorts of ways, do injuries and wrongs unto the souls and consciences of men. The one of them by force or subtlety defrauds them of the truth and perfection of God's words, as heretical and superstitious ministers. The others, at such time as they should with prayer, diligence, and preaching, defend the people of God from such injuries and wrongs, are negligent or dumb. This kind of injury doubtless the Lord God almighty will, at length, grievously revenge. Therefore, against this kind of injury, he spake unto the prophet Ezekiel: "If I purpose to send a plague upon the people, and thou give them not warning thereof, I will require their blood at thy hand." The same he said unto St. Peter: "Feed my lambs," "feed my sheep." And unto all the apostles he said, "Make ye all Gentiles my disciples." And St. Paul, fearing to fall in the danger of the second kind of doing wrong, in saving* the wrongs of false religion from the church of Christ, said, "Wo be unto me, if I preach not."

Upon the consideration of these things, seeing that all things are written for our instruction, I have thought it good to write and set forth this confession and protestation of my faith, submitting myself and my faith also, most humbly to be judged by your majesty, your most honourable council, with the godly assembly of your majesty's most high court of parliament, according to the word of God; that by this means I may avoid the pain and danger due unto all those who neglect or omit the injuries and wrongs that may happen and chance by sinister report, and false slander of God's word, to the conscience of any of your majesty's subjects. For I am credibly informed that many false and erroneous opinions are entered into their heads respecting me (God forgive them that have been the occasion thereof). If any way these injuries and dangerous slanders may be helped, I think this to be the way—to offer most humbly myself and my faith, to be known and judged by your majesty, according to the word of God. I protest before God and your majesty, I write not this confession for an apology or defence, to contend

* Concealing.

or strive with any man in any matter, nor for any private affection or displeasure I bear unto any man living, or for any inordinate or partial love unto myself, but for the cause and to the end before stated.

Likewise for three other great causes that shall follow. The one touches God, the other your majesty, the third your loving subjects. As concerning God, seeing both his majesty, mine own conscience, and my auditory know, that I have neither in doctrine, nor in manners, taught any other thing than I received of the patriarchs, prophets, and the apostles, it were not only sin, but also the very part of a miscreant, to deny or betray the innocency of that doctrine, or to be ashamed to stand to the defence thereof, seeing that all godly men have esteemed the true word of God more than their own mortal lives.

The second cause that touches your majesty and your most honourable council, is, because upon credit and good opinion, and partly by experience, that your majesty had both of my true faith and godly zeal, you appointed me, among others of your preachers, though most unworthy, to teach your subjects their duty to God and man. What true subject can hear and understand such untrue reports of those whom a king's majesty shall appoint to preach, and would not be glad, both for God's sake and his king's, to remove such ungodly reports if he can, for the peace and quietness of their subjects?

As for the cause that touches the people, it is no less important than eternal damnation. In case he be worthy of judgment, and in danger of hell-fire, that is angry with his brother, and calleth him fool, how much more if he call his brother heretic, and a denier of God? If the first be worthy of hell-fire, much more the last. Therefore, lest my brother should die, and then receive the deserved reward due for a slanderer, as much as it lies in me, I do by this protestation of my faith call him to repentance.

And in case any man stand in doubt of mine opinion and meaning in religion, let him not condemn me beforehand, but use the means with me which the ten tribes of Israel used with the tribe of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, that built, at their return to their possessions, an altar upon the borders of Jordan, which was like to have caused great wars. But it was stayed by consultation and communication with those that built it: and, their minds being known, the dissension was ended

and appeased. Even so I would desire my christian countrymen to use me, for I have built no altars of idolatry, if they be in doubt of me in any thing, and not to kill by hearsay, neither before they have heard me speak. Thus I pray God, both they and I may search always to live in his fear, to obey our king, and to be profitable and true members of this realm of England. So be it.

The 20th day of December, in the year of our Lord God, 1550.

THE

CONFESSION AND PROTESTATION

OF

JOHN HOOPER'S FAITH.

I. I BELIEVE, according to the holy scripture, that there are things without time and before time; also things with time and made in time. The thing without time and before time, is God only and solely; three in diversity of persons, and one in essence and equality of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: not three Gods, but one God. Things with time and in time, are all things that ever were, now are, or ever shall be created in heaven or in earth, until the day of the last general judgment, when both body and soul shall begin together immortality and joys without time*—for the soul ever lives;—by such are ordained of God to eternal salvation: and such as are appointed, and have deserved it, shall go to eternal damnation, to begin eternal pains, and so to endure without time.

II. I believe that the spirits, both good and bad, and likewise the souls of men and women created by God, are immortal, and from their creation live for ever, and never die. I believe all things created by God, as concerning their creation, to be perfect and good; without hatred, displeasure, grudge, contumacy, rebellion, disobedience, or pride, against their Maker.

III. I believe, that of things created by God, part of them, by grace of God's favour, have and ever shall, persevere and continue in the perfection and excellence of their creation; as the spirits or angels that never fell, nor hereafter shall fall, through the means of Christ.

IV. I believe, that part of those creatures, which God made in their perfection, are now subject, part of them to immortal pains, part to mortal pains, part unto both. As

* To all eternity.

the devil and man, that fell into this ruin and perdition of themselves, although in different ways—the devil, by pride and arrogancy, whilst he would be like unto God—man, deceived by ignorance and by craft of the devil—and not by any imperfection on God's part in their creation, nor by any force, compulsion, or violence on God's part that compelled them to evil.

For I believe God to be the author of life and salvation, and the will of the devil and of man to be the occasion of both their loss.

V. I believe all the people of the world are either the people of God, or the people of the devil. The people of God are those, that with heart and mind know, worship, honour, praise, and laud God, according to the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. The people of the devil are those that think they worship, honour, reverence, fear, laud, or praise God, any other ways besides, or contrary to, the doctrine of the prophets and apostles.

VI. I believe that the people of God, who are the very true church of God, have a certain doctrine, that never was, is, or hereafter shall be, violated by time or any man's authority. This doctrine only and solely is comprehended in the sacred and holy Bible.

VII. And I believe this doctrine of the patriarchs and prophets to be sufficient and absolutely perfect, to instruct me and all the holy church in our duties towards God and towards our neighbours. Of God it teaches, that he is but one, almighty, Maker of all things, merciful, just, and every thing that is good. And seeing we know nothing of God, and can judge nothing of God, touching our salvation, but after his word; we must judge of him, as we are taught therein; as well of his divine nature, as of the division of the persons in the divine essence. So that we are compelled by the authority of God's word to confess the plurality of persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the unity of one divine Godhead and essence.

VIII. I believe, as touching the Father of heaven, as much as holy scripture teaches us to believe, and is set forth in the first of the three creeds, the creed commonly called the apostles' creed, where we say,

IX. "I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," and so forth; with all such things as the creed of Nice believeth, and after the faith and creed of Athanasius in this behalf.

X. I believe the second person in Trinity to be one God with the Father in Godhead, and different in person. I believe him to be the very substance, image, and figure of God, without beginning or ending, with all other properties and conditions, that the holy scripture of God or the decree or doctrine of any of the three former creeds affirm.

XI. I believe that the mercy of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, pitied and had compassion upon Adam the lost man, and was provoked* to ordain the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, to debase and humble himself unto the nature of man, and also to become man, to redeem and save the lost man. For even as he was by eternal malice and craft of the devil brought to confusion, to sin, and so to death both of body and soul, having nothing in himself touching his first creation that provoked, stirred, enticed, or allured him to evil; even so, after his fall, was there nothing in him, or ever after could be in his posterity, that might or may allure to provoke him or any of his posterity to the means or help of his or their salvation. But even as he was lost by the malice and deceit of the devil; so is he, and so shall all his posterity be, saved by the mercy and merits of Christ. The devil and Adam's will wrought sin and death. God's mercy and Christ's merits wrought grace and life. The will of Eve and Adam straying and wandering abroad upon the fruit, an object and matter forbidden by God that they should not eat of it, brought them unto death; Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman, applying both body and soul to the obedience of God, deserved life; as it is in the scriptures and in the second part of the common creed.

XII. "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; he was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell, and the third day he arose again from death unto life, and ascended into heaven, and there sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father almighty. And from thence he shall come to judge both the quick and the dead."

I believe that by this means, and no other, the sins of believers are forgiven without the merits and deservings of Adam's posterity. By Adam sin came into the world, and by sin death; even so, without any merits, respects,

* Excited, induced.

and worthiness of Adam, or of any of his posterity, by Jesus Christ came remission of sin and life everlasting. And even as I believe steadfastly, that sin and death by this means are overcome and destroyed, and everlasting life follows it, so I believe the Son of God to be the perfect God and man, according to the scriptures: and do condemn the heresies of Arius and Marcion, with their accomplices and adherents, who wickedly believed the contrary. And as I confess and believe the means of our salvation to be Christ only, so I condemn the Pelagians and all such others, as believed and taught that they could, by their own powers, strength, and will, work their own salvation; which false opinion conculcates,* frustrates, slanders, condemns, and blasphemes all the deservings of Christ. Therefore the Pelagian is called worthily, "the enemy of grace."

XIII. Further, I believe that the grace of God, deserved by the passion of Christ, does not only freely and without any merits of man, begin, teach, and provoke† man to believe the promises of God, and so to begin to work the will of God; but I believe also all the works, merits, deservings, doings, and obedience of man towards God, although they are done by the Spirit of God, in the grace of God, yet being thus done, are of no validity, worthiness, or merit before God, except God by mercy and grace account them worthy, for the worthiness and merits of Jesus Christ that died under Pontius Pilate. So that I believe grace to be not only the beginner of all good works, but that all good works done by man in their greatest perfection, have need and want grace to pardon their imperfection.

XIV. I believe in the Holy Ghost, equally God with the Father and the Son, and proceeding from them both; by whose virtue, strength, and operation, the catholic church is preserved from all errors and false doctrines, and teaches the communion of saints in all truth and verity: the which Holy Spirit shall never forsake the holy church, which is Christ's mystical body.

XV. I believe that this Holy Spirit worketh the remission of sin, resurrection of the body, and everlasting life, according to the holy scripture.

XVI. This is my faith and doctrine concerning the Godhead and diversity of persons in the Holy Trinity, and also

* Treads under foot. † Excite, induce.

of the two natures in Christ, his Godhead and manhood; abhorring and detesting the heresies of Paul of Samosata, Arius, Nestor, and Eutyches, who were condemned by godly councils at Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, and others. I detest and abhor the Marcionite and Manichee, that feigns there are two gods, and both eternal, one good and the other evil, always at debate between themselves. I detest and abhor the monstrous doctrine of the Valentinians, and so generally of all those that have denied there is any God, or would have many gods. Also, all those I detest, that have erred and maintained their error in any thing concerning the essence of God, or denied the plurality of persons, as of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This is the faith of God's Spirit in my conscience, which I have learned in his word, and have faithfully and religiously preached and taught in all my sermons, as I will be judged by my auditory. Also, the same doctrine I have furthered and set forth in all my books and writings; though some calumniators and slanderers would gladly make the poor people believe the contrary. But I do decline and appeal from such uncharitable spirits unto the charitable reader, and loving hearts of all those who are endued with God's Holy Spirit: for they will not constrain nor force letter, syllable, word, or sentence contrary to the mind of the speaker and writer; but will judge and search for judgment in the processes and circumstances of the writer, and content themselves with the writer's mind, rather than bring their affection and corrupt minds to make their own imaginations and fancies another man's doctrine; as the Arian, Pelagian, papist, and others do and have done, bringing corrupt minds to the lesson and reading of Christ's Testament, and desiring that their false heresies and untrue imaginations should be Christ's doctrine.

Seeing both God's laws and man's laws suffer and give liberty to every man, in a cause of religion, to be interpreter of his own words, it were contrary to justice to put any man from it. For, if the author may not be interpreter of his own mind, what would not malice, envy, spite, and disdain, gather from words most truly and faithfully meant and written? And seeing charity and the laws of this realm, as appears in an act of parliament made in the first year of the reign of our sovereign lord

king Edward the Sixth, give liberty and license to him that shall be accused for a matter of religion, upon malice, ill will, hatred, disdain, or by made and suborned records, to repel and convict all such false records and their accusers by other faithful and indifferent records.

The which act of parliament God forbid should be denied to any of the king's majesty's preachers; for if the testimony of their audiences should not acquit them from despite and calumnies of malicious and uncharitable men, they shall not long preach the truth. For either the papists will accuse them, because they wish the pope and all monuments of papistry to be taken out of the way, or the carnal gospeller, that cannot abide to hear his faults and carnal life rebuked.

And I think if the king's majesty and his most honourable council prepare not the sooner a bridle and correction for sin, the true preacher of God hereafter will be more persecuted for reprehending sin and ungodly life, than ever yet hitherto he has been persecuted by the papists.

Thus I have declared my faith and belief towards God, according to the scriptures, in the which I trust to continue until death doth end this miserable and wretched life. Now I will declare also the same towards the church of Christ, what I believe of the magistrates, the ministers of the word, and the people I dwell with. And of these things I will speak according to the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. For many times, as well heretofore, as in our days, there have been superstitious hypocrites and fantastical spirits, that have neglected and condemned the office of magistrates, judgments, laws, punishments of evil, lawful dominion, rule, lawful wars, and such like, without which a commonwealth may not endure. They have condemned, also, the ministry and ministers of Christ's church; and as for christian society and charitable love, they confound them. They use the ministry of the church so that it is out of all estimation, supposing themselves to be of such perfection, that they need neither the ministry of the word, neither the use of Christ's holy sacraments, baptism and the supper of the Lord; and the other they use with such devilish disorder, that they would by a law make theirs their neighbours, and their neighbours theirs, confounding all property and dominion of goods. Before our time the fury and damnable heresy of Marcion and the Manichees against the magistrates, troubled many a

year dangerously both Asia and Africa; and not yet four hundred years ago a sort of people, called Flagelliferi,* did the same.

And now in our time, to the great trouble and unquietness of many commonwealths in Europe, the anabaptists† have resuscitated and revived the same errors, which is an argument and token of the devil's great indignation against civil policy and order. For he knows that where such errors and false doctrines of political orders are planted, two great evils necessarily must needs follow: the one is sedition, which bringeth murders, bloodsheddings, and dissipation of realms; the other is blasphemy against Christ's precious blood. For these sects think they are able to save themselves of and by themselves.

Further, when the magistrates are cumbered with those dangerous sorts of people, the devil knows they shall have no leisure at their will, to take some order by God's word to oppose such false doctrine. But thus we are taught out of the scripture, that even as man is ordained to the order, change, and alteration of time—as the order of the year appoints us now to be subject unto summer, now unto winter, now to the spring, and now to the fall; so has God ordained and commanded man to be obedient to policies‡ and orders wheresoever he be, so that they are not repugnant or contrary to the word of God. As Joseph in his heart bore abroad wherever he went, the true knowledge and invocation of§ God, also of Christ to come, yet outwardly in courts, judgments, contracts, and in possession of goods, he used the law of the Egyptians; even so did Daniel in Babylon.

There is no more to be taken heed of in laws and civil policies,‡ but to see that the law repugn|| not the law of God, and that the lawmakers, and those whom the execution of the law is commended unto, have a special and singular eye unto the effect and the meaning of the law, wherefore it was made a law. This St. Paul wonderfully

* Flagellantes, or Whippers, a sect which sprang up in Italy, in 1260, and thence spread through most of the countries of Europe. Vast multitudes professed their tenets, which were visionary and absurd, and included the belief that no one could be saved without whipping themselves as a voluntary penance. The popish inquisitors burned many of these unhappy people, who were not wholly suppressed for some centuries.

† The followers of Munzer, and the other fanatics, who at that time excited dreadful disturbances in Germany, are here referred to.

‡ Governments. § Calling upon. || Oppose.

exhorts people to understand, saying of the law and magistrates, "Let them be a fear and terror to the evil doers, and a praise and commendation to the well doers." Neither is it of consequence, though the form and manner of laws, of judgments, of pains, and punishments be not alike in all places, as the laws of feuderies* are not alike in Italy, England, France, Spain, or Germany, yet every nation should be subject to the laws of its own realm and civil policy. And in doing this, he shall offend God no more than the Englishmen who have longer days in the summer and shorter days in the winter, than those that dwell nearer to the south; or St. Paul, who had longer days at the solstice and pitch of the sun in Macedon, than Christ had at Jerusalem. But even as we are content with our measure and length of day and night, and others are contented with theirs, so must both they and we submit ourselves, and be contented with the measure and order of our own laws.

I do, therefore, bewail and lament, that the preachers in the church, and schoolmasters in their schools, and the householder in his household, know no better what the dignity and honour of a civil policy is, by whom it is ordained, and by whom it is preserved; how dangerous and damnable a thing it is before God and man, to trouble and disquiet it by any furor or madness of opinion; as the Marcionites, Manichees, and Anabaptists do. I see and know by experience much trouble and danger arise among the unlearned and ungodly people by ignorance; for when they see such deformities and confusions arise, as we see many times to happen in kingdoms, courts, judicials, and laws; also governors that fancy private profit and interest more than the profit of the whole commonwealth, and indifference to all men and all causes; they suppose, verily, for lack of knowledge in God's word, that all orders, policies, kingdoms, and dominions, are nothing but cruel tyranny and oppression of the poor; and also that they have their beginning and original either of the devil, or of pride and covetousness of men.

This same evil upon the same occasion of ignorance caused naturally wise men to be much troubled and vexed about the considerations of kingdoms, policies, rules and dominions; because they perceived all kingdoms were subject unto troubles and alterations; and not only that,

* Tenures of property.

but they perceived right well no kingdom to be perpetual, or for ever. And, indeed, whoso beholds the beginning, the continuance, and end of the empire of Rome, will see right well their imaginations were not vain things.

How much of her own blood and of strangers' blood did Rome shed before she came to the government and rule of all the world! When she aspired thereunto, and was a fear to all the world, how much blood of her own she shed by civil wars and contentions, the writings that mention of Sylla, Marius, Cinna, Cæsar, Pompey, Brutus, Antony, Augustus, and others, declare. Thus, when the Lord God would take from Rome for her sins the dominion of the world, he sent the Goths, Vandals, Huns, Arabs, and Turks, that wasted not only Italy, but also Egypt, Africa, and Asia, and so brought the empire of Rome to nought. As many times as I read and mark this history and others like it, it causes me to look upon many evil Englishmen, as Scipio looked upon the great city of Carthage, while it was burning, saying, with a lamentable voice, "The inconstancy of fortune in human things is to be lamented." Which words were spoken upon this occasion, that Carthage, being a city of great renown and dominion, was now become a prey unto the fire, and he turned, as wisdom always does, the consideration of present evils, unto others yet flourishing in high and prosperous felicity; and declared, as a man seeing before the ruin and fall of things that stood destinated, the fall of Rome was to come, which should perish by the like plague.

Even so, when I behold the evil and pestiferously affected minds of Englishmen, and ponder and weigh the fruits of such corrupt minds, contempt, hatred, grudge, and malice against their king, magistrates, laws, orders, and policies; doubtless, I cannot think but these men, as much as is in them, conspire and work the destruction of this realm. For it can be no otherwise, but that as contempt of godly laws, and sedition among the people and subjects, of what degree soever they are, have wrought the destruction of other realms; so it must and can do no otherwise unto this realm.

But what realm or kingdom soever will avoid these evils, let them provide the word of God to be truly and diligently preached and taught unto the subjects and members thereof. The want of it is the chief cause of

sedition and trouble, as Solomon saith ; " Where prophecy is wanting, the people are dissipated."* Wherefore I cannot a little wonder at the opinion and doctrine of such as say, a sermon once in a week, in a month, or a quarter of a year, is sufficient for the people. Truly, it is injuriously and evil spoken against the glory of God and salvation of the people. But seeing they will not be as good unto God as formerly they have been unto the devil, neither so glad to remove false doctrine from the people, and to continue them in the true ; whereas they before occupied the most part of the forenoon, the most part of the afternoon, and a great part of the night, to keep up the estimation and continuance of dangerous and vain superstitions: were it much now to occupy one hour in the morning, and another hour towards night, to occupy the people with true and earnest prayer unto God in Christ's blood, and in preaching the true doctrine of Christ, that they might know and continue in the true religion and faithful confidence of Christ Jesus?

Exercise and diligence bring credit unto religion, whether it be true or false; for it never takes place nor root in the people without diligence, as is to be perceived by the acts done in the time of Jeroboam and Rehoboam, the kings of Israel and Judah.

What brought the mass and all other idolatry into estimation, but daily preaching and saying thereof, with such laud and praise, that every old wife knew what a mass was worth? Fifteen masses in a church daily were not too many for the priests of Baal, and should one sermon every day be too much for a godly bishop and evangelical preacher? I wonder how it† may be too much opened and declared unto the people? If any man say, labour is left, and men's business lieth undone by that means, surely it is ungodly spoken ; for those that tell the people such things, know right well that there was neither labour, care, need, necessity, nor any thing else, that heretofore could keep them from hearing mass, though it had been said at four of the clock in the morning.

Therefore, as far as I can see, people were contented to lose more labour and spend more time then, to go to the devil, than now to come to God ; but my faith is, that both master and servant shall find the advantage they gain thereby at the year's end, though they hear morning

* Scattered, led astray. † The gospel.

sermon and morning prayers every day of the week. Now by this means they should learn not only to know God, but also their magistrates, and to put difference between the office and the person that is in office, and between the office and the troubles necessarily annexed unto the office; which brings not only knowledge of office and officer, but also honour and reverence unto them both; as St. Paul, who loved the policy, laws, order, and wisdom of the Romans, yet disliked very much the vice and naughtiness of Nero, unto whom he submitted; and willingly brought into servitude, both his body and goods, and rebelled not, though Nero was a naughty emperor, for his office sake, which was the ordinance of God. So did Elias love the state, honour, and dignity of the kings of Israel, yet bore testimony against the faults of Ahab.

The same doctrine St. Peter teaches unto all servants, commanding them to obey their masters, though they are evil, having a respect unto the place they are in, which is the order of God, and not unto the vice and abuse of the person in God's order. Truly, be the ruler ever so evil, yet the laws, judgments, punishments, and statutes, made for the punishment of evil, and the defence of the good, are the very work of God; for the magistrates are the keepers of discipline and peace. Therefore, as the motion of the heavens, and the fertility of the earth, are the works of God, and are preserved by him, even so are the governors and rulers of the earth; as David saith, "He giveth health to princes;" as it was showed in himself, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, and others.

The rule and government of king David was troublous and full of miseries; the reign of king Solomon his son was peaceable and quiet; the reign of Joshua was victorious and prosperous; the reign of the judges that followed so troublous and unquiet, that I have not read of a more rent and torn commonwealth: yet was the order of God all one, as well in the one as in the other, and required as much love, assistance, and obedience of the people to their king and magistrates in their trouble, as in their quietness and peace.

So Daniel, the prophet, most godlily and wisely teaches by the image which he saw of four sundry metals; but he concludes whether the regimen* and regent were gold, silver, copper, or iron, the people always obeyed.

* Government.

The doctrine and example of John Baptist, Christ, St. Stephen, and St. James, John's brother, teaches the same also. For although the regimen were neither so godly nor so quiet in Herod's time and Pontius Pilate's as it was in Solomon's time, yet they always gave like reverence, honour, and obedience unto them, for their order's sake, as though they had been the most virtuous princes of the world, as their doctrine, tribute, and blood records; for they gave unto Cæsar the things due unto Cæsar, as their bodies and their goods; but their souls they owed to none but unto God: and when diversity of religion and doctrine should have been discussed and determined by their laws, they declined their judgment, and appealed unto the word of God, to have all controversies ended thereby. When this took place, they gave thanks to God; when it did not, they were content patiently to bear whatsoever God's hand would permit the magistrate to lay upon them.

Were these examples known and kept before men's eyes, people would not for a fault or two that should happen in the regimen, irritate and provoke the regents and princes with contumacy and rebellion, as is seen commonly at this day; but rather follow the example of the Jews, who when they heard of the acts and doings of Ptolemy, who killed twenty thousand of their countrymen, and caused those that he took captive to eat the flesh of their own dead fathers and brothers, yet they rebelled not, but knew it was for their sin, and therefore exhorted one another to penance and amendment of life. The self-same doctrine our Saviour Christ teaches in his holy evangelist Luke.

This I thought good to put in my creed for the declaration of my faith towards civil magistrates, orders, and laws; and to open the difference between the orders, the person, and such troubles as are annexed unto the order; lest any man should, for trouble and confusion's sake, condemn order and regimen itself, or else by the means thereof detract, and neglect to take pains on such vocation, as the Epicureans did; whereas, indeed, rule and regimen themselves are the great benefits of God; and, therefore, now in the latter time, more to be preached and taught unto the people, for divers considerations, than ever heretofore; especially because contempt of honesty and laws, labours and godly exercises, reign more than ever they did. For at the beginning men so obeyed

reason, and were ruled thereby, that they brought themselves into order and policy; and, for the maintenance thereof, sought out crafts and arts necessary for the preservation of policy and order, and so were glad rather to be ruled by reason than by force and violence. This time being expired, and corrupt reason aspiring further than reason by nature should; partly for too much love of self, partly to tame and keep in subjection such as disordered all good order and rule, they descend from the regimen of reason unto the force of war and martial laws; the same seeming good unto almighty God, to tame and reclaim men by force who would not be ruled by reason.

But now are we fallen into the last time and end of the world, wherein for reason lust rules, and for just battle immoderate concupiscence rules; for scarcely is there one of a hundred that loves to seek for wisdom and knowledge of reason and of arts that other men found out and left unto us. And as for the pains and travail of war, let every man judge and consider himself, whether our weak nature can suffer as much as David, Achilles, Cyrus, Alexander, Hannibal, Marcellus, Scipio, Cæsar, and others did. Then shall we perceive that nature now in man is consumed, effeminated, and worn out, and is a thing most unable to do what fore-age hath done. Therefore, these latter days have more need of much teaching in civil causes than the old age before us, which governed themselves better and more modestly by reason only, than now we do by God's word and reason. And this is known not only by the holy scriptures, but also by profane writers, who declare iniquity increases with the age of the world. And our experience may be a commentary in this respect on God's laws and man's laws. For St. Paul declares the civil magistrate not only was ordained, but also preserved by God, and that all men should accept and account him the true magistrate whom God has appointed, and not such a one as the people and subjects appoint themselves.

And even as wise Cicero perceived, at the beginning of the mortal dissension and debate between Pompey and Julius Cæsar, and gave counsel according to the will of God, declared unto him by the suffrages and voices of the Romans, that Cæsar should have been chief ruler of the people; now, for lack and contempt of knowledge, both St. Paul and Cicero are neglected. For either the people will have no magistrate

at all, or else such a one as it pleases themselves, and not him that God has appointed. If this adventure take not place, they will change, if they can, the state of the commonwealth, that where one reigneth as a monarch or king, they would change it into the regimen of many. And where many reign, as men are never contented with the state that God hath appointed, they turn the regimen of many into the government of few.

Against whose preposterous judgment and fickle minds St. Paul vehemently writes: "The powers that be, are ordained of God," and not the powers that subjects shall choose and make at their pleasure. For no man, of what degree, state, or authority soever he be, being a private man, as all men are in a monarchy, where one rules, in respect to the king that rules, should meddle with the state of a realm; for it is God that ordained it, and it is he that dissolves it. Neither should this fond opinion take any place in a christian man's head, that any offices appointed by God should cause the officers to be evil before God. For the Lord gives them titles and names of great honour and love; as 'gods,' and 'such as serve and please him;' also 'the nurses of the church;' as the examples of Adam, Enoch, Noah, with others, who were in those days very godly rulers, to maintain virtue, and punish vice, show. This not only the patriarchs and godly men of the scripture saw, but also naturally wise men, who saw and reverenced order and policy; as Plato writes, saying, "As the ox is not ruled by the ox, nor the goat by the goat, but by a more pure nature, that is to say, by man; so the nature of man is too infirm to rule itself." Therefore God appointed not only men to rule, but also such men as excelled in wit and wisdom, adjoined with the special and singular grace of God: and so saith Plato. "Where any mortal man beareth dominion and not God, there can be no escape of calamities and miseries." Of the same opinion is Homer the poet, who saith that the gods appoint their shields to defend princes, as Pallas defended Achilles. This also Jehoshaphat the king in the place afore rehearsed wonderfully declares. And whosoever will consider the execution and due pains towards evil doers, shall right well perceive that God himself is in the magistrate. For Christ saith, "He that striketh with the sword shall perish with the sword." And of the oppressors it is spoken,

" Wo be unto thee that spoilest, for thou shalt be spoiled." So that we see God defends civil justice upon earth.

Abraham, Jeremiah, and St. Paul declare that the civil policy is the ordinance of God; by such prayer they commanded the people to pray for it; and this prayer for the magistrates declares what a diversity there is between a christian magistrate and a heathen; and wherein Cicero differs from Isaiah, and king David from Julius Cæsar. Cicero gave counsel according to reason and experience, to rule the commonwealth, but many times it took not good effect for lack of the wisdom of God. Isaiah and the rest of the prophets gave counsel not of themselves, but from God; and what prince soever obeyed their counsels, he prospered always, and had good success. The same you may see in the fashions and manners of their wars. Alexander thought himself strong enough by natural strength to conquer his enemies; king David added to his sling-stones the prayer and help of God's name. Therefore, if heathen magistrates should be obeyed, much more christian magistrates.

And in case the king's majesty of England may find no less obedience in his subjects than Scipio, Alexander, and others found among theirs, England shall be too strong with God's help for all the world. But Englishmen, I speak it with sorrow and grief of heart, have learned of Cleon, a man whom Aristophanes writeth of, that had one foot in the senate, and another in the field—so have Englishmen one hand at the plough, and the other against the magistrates. The ministers of the church, parsons vicars, have one hand upon the portesse,* and the other to strike at the king's crown. They follow the ape that Harmogenes' fable speaketh of, that would have had other apes build houses, towns, and cities, to have defended themselves from the dominion of their lord and ruler, man; and thought it not meet to live in that state to which God had appointed them. Even so subjects, now-a-days, make themselves defences, cities, castles, towns, tents, pavilions, to defend them against their king, lord, and magistrate, and will not be content to live in the state that God appointed them unto. But it shall happen unto them as it did unto the apes; their counsel and conspiracy shall never take place.

Let us therefore remember St. Paul, that saith, The

* The Romish service book.

powers that be, are of God, and not such as we would make; and let us be contented with them, and obey them for conscience sake: for such as disobey and rebel against superior powers, rebel against God, and so God punishes them with eternal damnation. This is enough to keep every good man and true subject in obedience to the higher powers. If the reader of the scripture of God note the first and the second chapter of Genesis, he would perceive rule and policy, before man wist what sin meant: for the Lord gave the superiority and dominion to Adam over all beasts. Of whom now we may right well learn obedience, if we were not worse than beasts.

Now a word or two of the magistrate's duty. Aristotle calls the magistrate 'a keeper of the law.' Let him use it therefore without respect of persons, in punishing such as by inordinate means trouble the commonwealth: and also such as blaspheme the living God, as godly kings and rulers have done, David, Josiah, Nebuchadnezzar, Constantine, and others. For although a civil law and punishment cannot change the heresies of the mind, neither the desire that men have to do evil; yet when they break forth against the honour of God, and trouble the commonwealth, they should be punished. For the magistrate is as one that has the two Testaments tied at his neck, and should defend them as his own life: and therefore St. Paul calls him not only the avenger of evil, but the maintainer of good; and Isaiah the prophet saith the same.

XVII. Now I will declare my faith concerning the external and visible church of Christ, and the ministers thereof. I call this visible church, a visible congregation of men and women, that hear the gospel of Christ, and use his sacraments, as he has instituted them. In which congregation the Spirit of God worketh the salvation of all believers, as St. Paul saith: "The gospel is the power of God to the salvation of the believer." As though he had said, By the gospel of Christ, where it is heard and believed, the mind is changed by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, from the love of sin unto the love of virtue. The will is wrought to consent; and the consent is so assisted by the Holy Ghost, that faith obtaineth the remission of sin, and the beginning of everlasting life. And these two marks, the true preaching of God's word and right use of the sacraments, declare what and where the true church is.

Unto the which church I would that all christian men should associate themselves, although there may happen to be some things to be desired in manners and discipline; for no church, as touching this part, can be absolutely perfect. But where the doctrine is sound, and no idolatry defended, that church is of God, as far as mortal man can judge. And where this doctrine and right use of the sacraments be not, there is no church of Christ, though it seem ever so holy. For in the blessed virgin's time, the pharisees and bishops were accounted to be the true church; yet by reason their doctrine was corrupt, the true church rested not in them, but in Simeon, Zachary, Elizabeth, the shepherds, and others. The same St. Paul teaches us, that whosoever he be that preaches other doctrine than the word of God, he is not to be credited, though he were an angel of heaven. Neither will such as know God hearken unto them, but they will hear Christ, the prophets, and apostles, and no others.

The other mark is the right use of sacraments, whereof were two in number with the fathers in the ministry of the church, and so many yet are with us in the ministry of the church, and have annexed unto them the promise of eternal salvation, and also of eternal damnation, if they are contemned, and may be lawfully had. In the law of Moses was circumcision and the paschal lamb: and in their places we have baptism and the supper of the Lord, diverse in external elements and ceremonies, but one in effect, mystery, and the thing itself. Except that their sacraments showed the graces of God to be given unto men in Christ to come, and ours declare the graces of God to be given in Christ that is already come; so that the sacraments are not changed, but rather the elements of the sacraments. And every one of these sacraments have their peculiar and proper promises, unto which they hang annexed as a seal unto the writing; and therefore are called, after St. Paul, the confirmations or seals of God's promises. They have peculiar elements, by which they signify the heavenly mysteries that sacramentally they contain, and are the thing indeed. They are called sacraments, that is to say, visible signs of invisible grace; they have their proper ceremonies, that testify unto us the obsignation* and confirmation of God's heavenly gifts. They have also their proper commandment,

* Sealing.

because we should not change, add, nor take from them any thing at our pleasure. Thus, in general, I think of all God's sacraments in the ministry of the church.

XVIII. And of baptism, because it is a mark of our christian church, this I judge after the doctrine of St. Paul, that it is a seal and confirmation of justice* or of our acceptation into the grace of God for Christ; for his innocency and justice by faith is ours, and our sins and injustice by his obedience are his; whereof baptism is the sign, seal, and confirmation. For although freely by the grace of God our sins are forgiven, yet the same is declared by the gospel, received by faith, and sealed by the sacraments, which are the seals of God's promises, as it is to be seen by the faith of faithful Abraham.

Baptism hath its promises, as is already said; its element, the water; its proper commandment and its proper ceremonies, washing in the water. As for other men's opinions, that say circumcision was the seal not only of Abraham's acceptation freely into the grace of God by faith, but also of his obedience and proper justice, I believe it not to be true; for St. Paul confutes it in the same place as an error, saying, "Abraham had nothing whereof he might glory before God." If he had nothing, God confirmed that which he gave him, and not what he found in him; for St. Paul saith, that circumcision was the seal of the justice that came by faith, and not by works. They are out of the way that have the like opinion of baptism: for St. Paul disputes not in that place whether works please God, but shows that our salvation cometh by grace, and not by works.

There are others that think sacraments to be the confirmations not only of our free acceptation into God's favour by faith, but also of our obedience towards God hereafter; and because infants and young babes cannot profess obedience, nor put off the old man, nor put on the new, they would exempt the young children of baptism. St. Paul confutes this opinion also in the same place: "Abraham," saith he, "believed God, and it was accounted unto him for justice;" and he saith not, Abraham professed obedience. Therefore God confirmed his own infallible truth and promises to Abraham by circumcision, and not Abraham's obedience; for if he had, he had confirmed the weak and uncertain infirmity of man, and not

* Righteousness.

his own infallible truth. For Abraham, with all his obedience, was infirm and imperfect without Christ, yet was bound to work in a godly life. As for those that say circumcision and baptism are alike, and yet attribute the remission of original sin to baptism, which was never given unto circumcision, they not only destroy the similitude and equality that should be between them, but also take from Christ remission of sin, and translate it unto the water and element of baptism.*

XIX. As for the supper of the Lord, which is the other sacrament whereby the church of Christ is known, I believe it is a remembrance of Christ's death, a seal and confirmation of his precious body given unto death, wherewith we are redeemed. It is a visible word, that preaches peace between God and man, exhorts to mutual love and godly life, and teaches to contemn the world for the hope of the life to come, when Christ shall appear, and come down in the clouds, who now is in heaven, as concerning his humanity,† and nowhere else, nor ever shall be, till the time of the general resurrection.

I believe that this holy sacrament has its proper promises, proper elements, proper commandment, and proper ceremonies.

XX. As concerning the ministers of the church, I believe that the church is bound to no sort of people, or any ordinary succession of bishops, cardinals, or such like, but unto the word of God only; and none of them should be believed but when they speak the word of God. Although there are diversity of gifts and knowledge among men, some know more, and some know less; and if he that knows least teaches Christ according to the holy scriptures, he is to be accepted; and he that knoweth most, and teacheth Christ contrary, or any other ways than the holy scriptures teach, is to be refused.

I am sorry, therefore, with all my heart to see the church of Christ degenerated into a civil policy;‡ for even as kings of the world naturally must follow by descent from their parents in civil regimen, rule, and law, as

* Upon this subject, as is well known, there are pious and intelligent christians who differ from some of the opinions stated in this article; but the doctrines of the venerable reformer, as set forth in his confession, could not be given with fidelity had this passage been omitted. The same remark is applicable to some other points stated in this confession, although upon different grounds.

† Human nature. ‡ Government.

by right they ought; even so must such as succeed in the place of bishops and priests that die, possess all gifts and earning of the Holy Ghost, to rule the church of Christ as his godly predecessor had; but the Holy Ghost must not be captive and bondman to bishops' sees and palaces.

And because the Holy Ghost was in St. Peter at Rome, and in many other godly men that have occupied bishoprics and dioceses, therefore the same gifts, they say, must needs follow in their successors, although, indeed, they are no more like in zeal or diligence than Peter to Judas, Balaam to Jeremiah, Annas and Caiaphas to John and James. But thus I conclude of the ministers, of what degree or dignity soever they be, they are no better than records and testimonies, ministers and servants of God's word and God's sacraments; the which they should neither add unto, diminish, nor change any thing. And for their true service and diligence in this part, they should not only be reverenced of the people, but also honoured by the magistrates, as the servants of God. And I believe that as many souls as perish by their negligence or contempt of God's word, shall be required at their hands.

XXI. Of the people thus I believe—that they owe their duty and obedience to God, to their king, and magistrates, unto their neighbours, and to themselves.

Unto God they owe both body and soul, to laud and praise him according to God's book, to call upon him in the days of their trouble, and upon none else, to confirm both their doctrine and their lives to promote and set forth the glory of God.

Their duty to the king's majesty is their obedience to him, his laws, and the realm, for conscience sake; and their readiness rather to lose both body and goods, than to offend his highness, or his laws. And whenever any subjects are called to serve with body or goods at home or from home, willingly they must obey without question, or further inquisition to search whether the king's cause be right or wrong. For, whether it be or not, it makes the death of him that serves in this respect neither better nor worse. For I believe, that such as obeyed king Josiah, and were slain in the battle against the Egyptians, were acceptable unto God in Christ, though king Josiah had not the best quarrel. In this case the subject owes his

body and goods unto his lawful magistrate, and may deny him neither of them.

Unto their neighbours they owe good will and charity, help and preservation of their bodies, souls, goods, and fame, that none of all these perish, if they may preserve them.

They owe unto themselves study and labour to read and hear the scripture of God, until such time as they have laid a true foundation of faith in Christ. When that is done, they are bound to themselves to build upon that foundation all charitable works, as well to God as to man, with innocency of life.

After that, they owe to themselves study and diligence to make defence for their true religion against the devil, the flesh, the world, sin, the wisdom of man, and superstitious hypocrites, which cease not to pervert and destroy in man the image and work of God.

Away! away! I pray you, with this opinion, that thinks a man owes no more unto himself for religion, than to learn by rote the creed, ten commandments, and paternoster. St. Paul rebukes that opinion, as it is to be seen in his epistles.

We owe unto ourselves due labour in praying unto God daily for the necessities of both body and soul, and, likewise, to give him thanks for all the goodness that he has given unto us.

Also, we owe unto ourselves the eschewing* and avoiding of idleness and oisivity:† also, we owe ourselves the labours of our own hands, with the industry and gift of reason, learning, and wit,‡ to eat our own bread with the sweat and pain of our own bodies, according to the commandment of God.

Thus I conclude my faith; which, being examined by the word of God, is catholic and godly. God send us of his grace to fear him, honour the king, and to love one the other, as Christ loveth us all. So be it. The 20th of December, anno Domini MDL.—O Lord, bless thy church, and save our king!

* Shunning. † Indolence. ‡ Understanding.

BISHOP HOOPER'S

ARTICLES AND MONITORY LETTER TO HIS CLERGY.

A. D. 1551.

From Strype's Memorials of Archbishop Cranmer.

First, he sent a general monitory letter to his clergy, signifying his intention of coming among them; gravely advising them of their office, and what was required of those who were entered into this holy vocation. When he visited them, he gave them articles concerning the christian religion, to the number of fifty, which bore this title: "Articles concerning the christian religion, given by the reverend father in Christ, John Hooper, bishop of Gloucester, unto all and singular, deans, parsons, prebendaries, vicars, curates, and other ecclesiastical ministers, within the diocese of Gloucester, to be had and retained of them, for the unity and agreement, as well as the doctrine of God's word, as also for the confirmation of the ceremonies agreeing with God's word." Let me give the reader the five first of them.

I. That none do teach any manner of thing to be necessary for the salvation of man, other than what is contained in the books of God's holy word.

II. That they faithfully teach and instruct the people committed unto their charge that there is but one God, everlasting, incorporate,* almighty, wise, and good, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also he will be called upon by us. And though one God in essence and unity in the Godhead, yet, in the same unity, three distinct persons.

III. That they teach all the doctrines contained in the three creeds.

IV. That they teach that the church of God is the congregation of the faithful, wherein the word of God is truly preached, and the sacraments truly ministered, according to the institution of Christ: and that the church of God is not by God's word taken for the multitude or company of men, as of bishops, priests, and such other; but that it is the company of all men hearing God's word, and obeying the same; lest that any man should be

* Not a body—a spirit.

seduced, believing himself to be bound unto an ordinary succession of bishops and priests, but only unto the word of God, and the right use of the sacraments.

V. That although the true church cannot err from the faith, yet, nevertheless, forasmuch as no man is free from sin and lies, there is not, nor can be, any church known, be it ever so perfect or holy, but it may err.

BISHOP HOOPER

TO THE CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER.*

To the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

FORASMUCH as of all charges and vocations, the charge of such as are appointed to the ministry and function of the church is the greatest; it is to be provided and foreseen, that such as are called and appointed to such vocation and office, be such as can satisfy the said office. Which may be done, as St. Paul saith, two ways. The one, if they are of sound doctrine, apt to teach, and to exhort according to knowledge, and able to withstand and confute the evil sayers. The other, if their life and manners are faultless, and cannot justly be blamed: which consists in this; if the minister be sober, modest, keeping hospitality, honest, religious, chaste; not dissolute, angry, nor given to much wine, no fighter, no covetous man, such as governs well his own house; and gives an example of virtue and honesty unto others. For by what just means canst thou reprehend and blame any other in that fault wherein thou thyself art to be blamed? Or by what occasion canst thou preach chastity, or desire to have the same in another man, when thou thyself, despising both God and holy matrimony, dost either nourish or keep a harlot or concubine at home in thy house, or else must commit adultery? Neither is he anything less to be ashamed, who will persuade others to live in sobriety, he himself being drunk. Wherefore, what authority shall he obtain or get unto himself, and his ministry, who is daily seen and marked of men to be a common haunter of alehouses and taverns, of evil people, cards, dice, and such like.

* Nearly the whole of whom were open or secret Romanists.

Hereby shall you perceive and know, how that the old priests and pastors of Christ's church did, by their truth and gravity, subjugate and bring under the hard-necked and stiff-stubborn heathen, and caused them to have the same in fear. Insomuch that the wicked emperor, Julian, caused the priests of the pagans to order their lives according to the lives of the others. But look what authority and reverence the old severity and graveness of the pastors and priests brought unto them at that time; even as much shame and contempt, or else a great deal more, as I fear, does the lechery, covetousness, ambition, simony, and such other corrupt manners, bring unto most priests, pastors, and ministers, that are now-a-days. Wherefore I, being not forgetful of my office and duty towards God, my prince, and you, do desire and beseech all you, for Christ's sake, who commanded that your light should so shine before men, that they seeing and perceiving the same, might glorify the Father which is in heaven.

Give your diligence, well-beloved brethren, together with me, so that the dignity and majesty of the order of priests, being fallen in decay, may not only be restored again, but that, first and principally, the true and pure worshipping of God may be restored; and that as many souls are committed to my faith and yours, they may, by our wholesome doctrine and cleanness of conversation, be moved unto the true study of perfect charity, and called back from all error and ignorance; and finally to be reduced and brought unto the high bishop and pastor of souls, Jesus Christ; and to the intent ye may the more easily perform the same, I have, according to the talent and gift given me of the Lord, collected and gathered out of God's holy word, a few articles, which, I trust, will much profit and do you good. And if any thing shall be now wanting or lacking, I trust, by the help of your prayers and good counsel, they shall be shortly hereafter performed.

Let every one of you, therefore, take good heed to approve yourselves faithful and wise ministers of Christ. So that, when I shall come to visit the parishioners committed to my cure, and come from God and the king's majesty, ye be able not only to make answer unto me in that behalf, but also unto our Lord Jesus Christ, Judge both of the quick and the dead, and a very strait revenger of his church. Thus fare you well unto the day of my coming unto you.

A HOMILY

TO BE READ

IN THE TIME OF PESTILENCE;

CONTAINING THE TRUE CAUSES OF THE SAME; AND LIKEWISE A MOST PRESENT REMEDY FOR AS MANY AS ARE ALREADY, OR HEREAFTER SHALL BE, INFECTED WITH THAT DISEASE.

GATHERED OUT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

BY JOHN HOOPER,

BISHOP OF WORCESTER AND GLOUCESTER.

A.D. 1553.

To all pastors and curates within the king's majesty's diocese of Worcester and Gloucester.

EVEN as we are blind and unthankful for God's favourable mercies, wherewith he follows us in health, wealth, and prosperity; so we are blind, and insensible of his most just plagues, wherewith he punishes us in sickness, scarcity, and troubles. And now, among other tokens of his displeasure and wrath, he has sent us, in divers places, one of the extremest plagues that ever he devised to punish man with in this life—the plague of pestilence.

Forasmuch as he means thereby not only to kill and destroy the bodies of such, as by this plague he purposes to take out of this mortal life; but, also, without repentance and turning to his mercy in Christ before death, the souls of such as depart from hence, must needs perish by God's just judgment. And not only this will be the end of such as it pleases God to strike to death by this his servant and messenger, the plague of pestilence; but, also, the like danger of his displeasure remains to me, and to all others that have the cure and charge of the people's souls in this the king's majesty's most noble realm, over whom God and he has made us watchmen and overseers,

to admonish and warn the people of all dangers and plagues that God shall send for their punishment. In case we admonish not in time the people committed unto our charge of such plagues as for sin he purposes to punish us with, their loss and damnation shall be required at our hands.

For the discharge of myself, and also for the better instruction of such as have cures within this diocese of Worcester and Gloucester, and yet are not best able to discharge them, and further for the profit and salvation of the people, among whom it may please God to send his fearful plague of pestilence; I have thought it my bounden duty, seeing at all times I cannot comfort the sick myself, to collect or gather into some short sermon or homily a medicine and most pleasant help for all men against the plague of pestilence; and in the same also to provide some present remedy for such as shall be infected with that disease. And for the better understanding of the medicine, I will use the order, which all learned physicians use in their practice: first, I will show the chief cause of the pestilence; and then, what remedy is best to be used against it, and to heal it when it has infected any man.

And although I will speak herein somewhat as other physicians have done; yet because they have spoken already more than I can in the matter, though it be a great deal less than the matter of the disease requires, for none of them have showed any certain remedy, be their reason ever so good, I will briefly, as by the way, somewhat speak of this disease, as they do. But as a preacher of God's word, and as a physician for the soul, rather than for the body, I will treat of the sickness and the remedy thereof, according to the advice and counsel of God's word; which supplies all things omitted and not spoken of, concerning this most dangerous plague, by such as have written, besides the scripture of God, their mind touching the same. For indeed the chief cause of all plagues and sickness, is sin; which, remaining within all men, works destruction, not only of the body, but also of the soul, if remedy be not found.

And whereas Galen saith, that "all pestilence comes by the corruption of the air, so that both beast and man drawing their breath in the corrupt air, draw the corruption thereof into themselves," he saith well; yet not enough. He saith also, very naturally, that when the air

is altered from its natural equality and temperature to too much and intemperate heat and moisture, pestilence is likely then to reign. For as he saith in the same place, "Heat and moisture distempered are most dangerous for the creatures of the world," yet that is not enough. As Ezekiel saith, where God sends all these distempers, if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in the midst of them, they shall be safe. Even so saith David also: "Though they die at the right hand ten thousand fold, and die at the left hand a thousand fold, the plague shall not touch him that sitteth under the protection of the Highest."

And whereas reason has many good and probable arguments in this matter touching the cause of pestilence; as that it should come sometimes by reason of such humours as are in the body disposed and apt to corrupt, then is the man quickly infected, by drawing and breathing as well the corruption of himself, as the infection of the air. And that such humours, as are gross and inclined to corruption, rise from evil and immoderate diet; and that the infection takes its original and beginning from such beasts, carrion, and other loathsome bodies as rot upon the face of the earth, not buried; or else from moorish, standing, and dampish* waters, sinks, or other such unwholesome moistures; so that towards the fall of the leaf, both the air that man lives in, as also man's body itself, are more apt and disposed to putrefaction at that time than any other, for divers natural causes.

These causes are to be considered as natural and consonant to reason; yet there are reasons and causes of pestilence of more weight, and more worthy of deep and advised considerations and advertisements than these are. And the more, because they lie within man, and are marked but by very few, and hide themselves secretly, till they have poisoned the whole man, both body and soul. For indeed physicians that write, meddle with no causes that hurt man, but such as come unto man from without. As the humours, they say, take their infection from unwholesome meat and bad diet, or else from the corruption of the air, with such like. But our Saviour Christ shows that our corruption and sickness rise from within us, as I will declare hereafter in the causes which the scripture teaches of pestilence and all other diseases.

I require you diligently to look upon the same, and to

* Stagnant.

read it in your churches : that the people may understand both the cause of this God's plague of pestilence, and how to use themselves in the time of this sickness, or any other that shall happen unto them by God's appointment. So that God may be glorified in them, and you and I discharged of our bounden duties ; and they themselves, that shall happen to be infected with the plague of pestilence, and by the same be brought to death, may be assured, through true and godly doctrine, to die in the Lord, and so be eternally blessed straightway after their death. And in case God reserve them to longer life, they may live in truth and verity unto him, with detestation and hatred of sin, the original cause of man's misery and wretchedness : and with the love of mercy and grace, the original and only workers of man's quietness and everlasting salvation, given unto us from God the Father almighty, through Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord ; to whom, with the Holy Ghost, be all honour and praise, world without end. So be it.

HOMILY,

TO BE READ

IN THE TIME OF PESTILENCE.*

Repent, and believe the gospel.—Mark i.

It is the desire of all sick men to know what medicine and remedy has been known most to prevail, best to remove, and soonest to cure and make whole the diseased person. And the greater and more dangerous the sickness is, the more circumspect and wise the sick man must be in knowledge and choice of the medicine, lest he seek a remedy inferior and too weak for the greatness and strength of his disease.

The nature and condition therefore of pestilence being so dangerous, whosoever is infected or tainted therewith, has need to be well instructed, and thoroughly persuaded of a sufficient remedy, stronger than the sickness itself; or else the disease shall hurt the sick patient more than the medicine can do him good; and then must needs follow the death and the destruction of the diseased person. It behoves therefore all men, as they are mortal, to know the most general and most dangerous diseases that mortality shall be troubled with; and then, as they see their great and necessary adversities and sickness, to know also the greatest and most necessary remedy and help against their diseases. And because sin has so prevailed on us, that truth, taught us by the example of others, sooner instructs and tarries longer than any thing taught us by doctrine or testimony, I shall, before I enter into the causes of the pestilence, show the strength and nature of sickness from the examples of such godly persons as are mentioned in the word of God for our instruction.

King David, amongst other diseases, fell into pestilence; the greatness and danger whereof passed all human and

* A pestilential disease, called the sweating sickness, prevailed in many parts of England during the sixteenth century. It was very fatal to persons of all ranks. Two years before this homily was written, the duke of Suffolk and his brother died of this disease, and more than a hundred persons died in one day, in London alone.

worldy helps, as appears by his lamentable cry and complaint unto the Lord: "My soul is sore troubled: but how long, Lord, wilt thou defer thy help?" (Psa. vi. xlii.) And he made the same cry and complaint unto the Lord when the plague of pestilence had infected his whole realm from Dan to Beersheba, (2 Sam. xxiv.) and saw the remedy thereof to be only in God; praying him to command his angel to strike the people no more.

Hezekiah the king saw, (Isa. xxxviii.) that, besides God, all medicines and remedies were too weak, and inferior for the strength and power of the pestilence and sickness; wherefore he turned himself to the wall, and prayed God to do that for him, which no physic nor medicine was able to do.

And St. Paul, in his wonderful oration (1 Cor. xv.) which he makes concerning the resurrection of the dead, weighs most deeply the nature and condition of man's miserable state in this life; burdening him with such strong adversaries, sickness and diseases, both of body and soul, that every man may see how impossible it is for man to find deliverance from the tyranny and strength of sickness, except only by the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; numbering there six adversaries so strong, that the least of them, except Christ help, is able to destroy both body and soul.

The first, is corruption; the second, mortality; the third, sin; the fourth, the law condemning sin; the fifth, death; the sixth, hell; necessary and unavoidable plagues and sickness of man in this life. Against which he finds no remedy, neither by Galen nor Hippocrates, neither yet by the earth of Para, (Plin. lib. xxiv.) which men say cures all wounds. But with great faith and confidence he marks and weighs the strength of diseases, that though they are ever so strong, yet are inferior to the medicine and remedy, which God has provided for us only in Christ. Therefore he compares the inferior strength of all those sicknesses, unto the sufficient remedy of God through Christ, saying after this manner: "Thanks be unto God, which hath given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Whereby it is evident and plain, that God is the only remedy for all plagues and diseases. Howbeit, now I shall more specially open the causes of the plague, and the nature of the same: that our sickness and the causes thereof may be more known, and the better avoided.

The principal cause of pestilence is opened by St. Paul in these words: "By sin came death into the world:"

and because of sin, God sends the plague of pestilence and all other diseases that punish towards death. As king David saith, "Thou dost punish the children of men for sin." Moses also plainly shows that the principal and chief cause of pestilence is not in the corruption of the air, nor in the superfluous humours within man; but that sin and the transgression of God's law is the very cause and chief occasion of pestilence and of all other diseases. And the experience thereof was tried in the pestilence that reigned in king David's time for his sins, and the sins of the people. So that all the scripture of God manifestly declares that the contempt and breach of God's laws is the chief and principal cause of pestilence, and of all other plagues that he sends for our punishment. And from this cause proceeds the corruption of the air, which is never corrupted, nor can corrupt man or beast, except man, for whose sake and comfort both air and all the other creatures were made, are first corrupted by sin and transgression of God's laws. Neither could they take any surfeit by meats, nor could any evil humours be engendered of any meats, were not the man that uses them corrupt and first infected with sin. But when the Lord sees that the people forget or contemn his blessed commandments, and that those who are appointed to rebuke and punish such transgressors of God's laws, suffer the glory of God, and his holy commandments, to be oppressed and set at naught, as we see daily they are indeed;—from these causes, our sin and abomination, the Lord takes occasion to turn his good creatures, made for our life, to be a means of our death: which never would be, were not our dishonouring and contempt of God so heinous.

For the Lord's creatures are perfectly good, and all made to comfort and rejoice; wholesome, clean, and pure without all infection. But seeing that the contempt of God and the filthiness of sin is neither opened, declared, nor detected by the clergy, nor punished by the heads of the country, and officers appointed under God and the king: therefore, lest there should nothing else live in this world than sin, abomination, and contempt of God; God, for the taking away and destruction of filthy life and filthy livers, appoints an extraordinary magistrate to reform and punish the mother of all mischief, sin, and contempt of God's holy word. And so he alters, not by chance, nor by the influence of stars, the wholesomeness of the air into

pestilent and contagious infection; and the meat and drink with their nutriment and food, into poison and venom, that, by their means, sin and sinners might be slain and taken out of this world, and no longer blaspheme God.

Thus the word of God declares the effectual and principal cause of pestilence to be the contempt of God's word, which should keep men in order both to God and man. The breaking whereof has always brought these plagues into realms, as profane writers also manifestly declare. Orosius saith, that the great dearth and famine that came amongst the Romans, in the time of Cæsar Augustus, was because Caius, his nephew, refused to honour the living God, as he was taught at Jerusalem when he passed into Syria. Wherefore, it is expedient, and before all things necessary, as the plague is come into sundry places about us, for every one to try himself, what just causes of this pestilence each man has within himself. Every christian man and woman must search whether their religion and christianity are such as God by his word maintains to be good; for there is no greater occasion of pestilence than superstition and false religion.

The bishop, parson, vicar, and curate, must examine themselves, what knowledge of God's word is in them, and what diligence they have taken to bring the people to a right knowledge and perfect honour of God: for there is no greater danger of pestilence than where the clergy either are ignorant of God's word, or negligent in teaching thereof.

The justices and gentlemen must look how they keep themselves, and the king's majesty's people in the true knowledge and obedience of God's laws and the king's: for nothing provokes the pestilence more dangerously than where such as sit and are appointed to do justice, follow their own affections with contempt and injury both to God and man; and the plague of God will revenge it.

All we, therefore, that are subjects, and live under one God and one king, must, now that God hath sent us this pestilence, see that we have true, loving, faithful, trusty, and obedient hearts; with one whole mind, altogether to obey, reverence, love, help, succour, defend, and uphold with all our wits, goodness, riches, and strength, this our only king, with the magistrates and counsellors that are appointed under his highness. For, as St. Paul saith, "He that disobeyeth and resisteth the higher powers

appointed by God, resisteth God," and provoketh the pestilence and vengeance of God against us. And we must take heed also that we hate not one another: if we do, the plague will not cease, and the places that yet are not infected, God shall infect, whatsoever defence man makes against it. And although Galen, of all remedies, saith, "To fly the air that is infected, is best;" yet I know that Moses, by the word of God, saith: "Flee whither thou wilt, in case thou take with thee the contempt of God and breach of his commandment, God shall find thee out." Yea, and although many medicines are devised, and assure that the infected shall be made whole; yet, notwithstanding, I know God's word saith the contrary, that he will send unto insensible, careless, and wilful sinners such a plague and so incurable a pestilence, that they shall not be delivered, but die and perish by it.

Therefore, forasmuch as sin is the chief occasion of pestilence, let every man eschew and avoid it both speedily and penitently, and then shall you be preserved from the plague sufficiently, as you shall perceive in the remedy of this dangerous plague, that begins to reign amongst us. For, doubtless, although we could flee to Locris or Crotone, where, as Pliny saith, the pestilence never was, yet God saith, "In case we fear not him, we shall surely be infected."

The Remedy against the Pestilence.

As the scripture of God alone shows the true cause of pestilence; so it shows the very true and only remedy against it. I do not dislike the remedies which natural physic has prescribed; yet I do not hold them as sufficient remedies, on account of their imperfection. I would that they were used, and also the remedies prescribed in God's book not omitted. For I see all the remedies that ever were devised by man are not able assuredly to remove the pestilence from him that is infected therewith, although they are ever so excellent and good. And I find the same concerning preservation from the pestilence devised by man; it is also insufficient for man's preservation, yet not to be contemned. For their chief preservation against the pestilence is very good and allowable, and yet not sufficient; which is fleeing and departing from the place where the air is corrupt. Wherefore, for such as may, nothing is better than to flee; and except a man do,

he offers himself to a present danger of death; but yet the word of God saith plainly, that "flee whither we will, if we forsake not sin, and serve the living God, the plague shall overtake us."

And this cannot be a sufficient remedy, for there are certain persons that cannot flee although they would; as the poorer sort of people that have no friends nor place to flee unto, more than the poor house they dwell in. Likewise, there are such offices of trust, as men for no cause may flee from; as the bishop, parson, vicar, and curate, who have the charge of those that God pleases to infect with the pestilence; and if they forsake their people in this plague-time, they are hirelings and no pastors; and they flee from God's people into God's high indignation. Such also as have places and offices of trust for the commonwealth, as the captains of soldiers in the time of war, judges and justices in the time of peace; in case they should flee their country, or leave their wars for the plague of pestilence, they would not be good soldiers nor good justices for the commonwealth. And they shall be accountable to almighty God for all the hurt and detriment that happens unto the people in their absence.

Wherefore, seeing there is no certain remedy devised by man, neither for such as cannot flee, nor for them that may flee; we must seek other medicine and help at God's hand, who can and will preserve those that are whole, and make them whole that are sick, if it be expedient for man, and most for his own honour. The best preservative, therefore, to keep men from the pestilence is what Moses speaks of: "Let us do sacrifice unto the Lord, lest we be stricken with pestilence or sword." And Joshua and Caleb told the people, that a faithful trust in the Lord was the best remedy for them: which, if they contemned, they should find what God there threatened, speaking to Moses "How long will this people be unfaithful? I will strike them with pestilence, and consume them." Also, David knew that the only remedy to keep Jerusalem from the plague was, that God should turn his wrath from the city for his sins and the sins of the people.

But now, to bring the remedy the better to the understanding of the people, I will show it by this place of St. Mark: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel;" in which words is contained the only medicine against the pestilence, and also all other diseases, if the test be well and

advisedly considered, wherein Christ uses a very natural order to heal all diseases. For as the remedy of all diseases naturally is taken from conditions and qualities contrary to those that work and maintain the sickness; so Christ in these words declares that the preservation and help of sin and wickedness, the cause of pestilence, proceeds from virtues and conditions contrary to the qualities and nature of such things as preserve and keep this wicked sin and sickness in man. As when a man is fallen into sickness by reason of too much cold and moisture, the remedy must be gathered naturally from the contrary, heat and drought. For this is a common and true principle—"Contraries are helped by their contraries." If nature become too cold, it must be helped with heat: if it be too hot, it must be cooled: if it be too moist, it must be dried: if it be too dry, it must be moistened: if it be too cold and moist, it must be heated and dried: if it be cold and dry, it must be heated and moistened: if it be too hot and moist, it must be cooled and dried: if it be too hot and dry, it must be cooled and moistened. These are very natural remedies, if they are well used with true proportion and convenient use according to the rules of physic.

And as these are good and natural for the body wherein the pestilence dwells; even so is Christ's medicine in the first of St. Mark a more present and certain remedy for the soul which keeps the body in life, to remove or to remedy the sin of man, which is the cause of all plagues and pestilence; in case this medicine of Christ be used to remove sin, the cause of sickness, as the other is used to remove the effect of sin, which is sickness. As the body is fallen into sickness by too much cold or moisture, either by its nature, that originally was corrupted by Adam, or by our own accustomed doing of sin; so it must be made whole by the heat of repentance and true faith in the merits of Christ Jesus, who died for the sins of the world.

For this is a true and most certain principle of all religion, "One contrary must remedy the other." Seeing Adam by his fault began our death by sin, it must be cured by Christ, who is without sin. And whereas our own works are sin and filthiness, wherewith God is displeased, we must desire the works of Christ, to work the good will and favour of our heavenly Father again. And

as by our own wits, wisdoms, religion, and learning, we have committed idolatry and superstition, we must now by God's wisdom, God's word, and his most true religion, amend our faults, and turn to true and godly honouring of him. Further, as our own inventions have brought us from the knowledge of God; the remedy is, that God's word must bring us to him again; for against all untruths brought in by man, the word of God is the only remedy.

The experience thereof we may have plainly in the scripture. Whereas, for the salvation of the world, God appointed Christ, his only Son, to be born, and also to be made known unto the world, that by him it might be healed of all sickness and sin, as appears by St. Matthew, and others of the evangelists; yet was the world so blind and so corrupted with sin, that Christ was born and manifested unto them, and they of the world were nothing the better, as it appears in St. Matthew, where St. John the Baptist, saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand," shows the remedy of all sins and sickness, and the means how to receive and take this remedy. The remedy was Christ alone, as he saith in St. John, and also in St. Matthew; and the means to come by the remedy was to repent, as you shall know further hereafter, when you know what repentance is.

The same may you also see in St. John, in the dialogue between Christ and Nicodemus, a man who, according to the judgment of the world, knew life and death, sickness and health, the cause of the one, and also of the other, as well as any learned man among all the congregation and church of the Jews; yet, indeed, was as ignorant of his own sickness, and also as far from true knowledge how to come to health, as an ignorant man might be. And the cause was, that he understood not the nature of sin, as it is esteemed by the word of God, nor the remedy thereof which God has prescribed and appointed. Wherefore Christ told him by plain words, except he were helped and cured of his disease and sickness by contrary remedies, he could never understand nor come to his health: and no marvel; for he knew the sickness of sin no otherwise than his forefathers and the worldly men knew sin—that is to say, they knew such sins as were known to reason, and done by the body and outward action of men; and the same knowledge had he, and no more, of the remedy

against the sickness of sin. And as his fathers and the world thought, so did he, that the merits of their sacrifices and their own well doing, was a sufficient remedy to heal them both in body and in soul. Whereupon Christ most mercifully pities the poor man, and with contrary knowledge both of sickness and the remedy thereof, shows that the disease wherewith man is infected, goes further than reason and the outward action of the body, and occupies the soul of man with concupiscence, rebellion, frowardness, and contumacy against God; wherefore he calls all that man hath of himself but flesh. And he shows that the remedy against this sickness comes not of the worthiness of any sacrifice or merits of his, or any sinful man's works; but that the remedy thereof depends only upon the merits of his blood and passion, and shows the same by the comparison of the brazen serpent appointed by Moses. And he argues this way: as the people that were stung with the serpents in the wilderness were not made whole by their own works, or for the dignity or service of any sacrifice that they offered, but by the sight of the serpent that represented Christ to come; even so, Nicodemus, or any others that are stung with the serpents of sin, are not made whole by their own works, or any sacrifice they can offer, but only by the merits of Christ. And even as the people could not come to the knowledge of this remedy by the serpent, through their fathers' or their own wisdom, no more can Nicodemus, or any man living, come to the knowledge of the remedy for sickness and sin in our Saviour Christ, except he learn it by the word of God, through the instruction of the Holy Ghost.

The same remedy, also, Christ uses in his words before rehearsed: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." In which words our Saviour Christ shows all things are considered in sin and in the remedy thereof. For in the first part of his words he declares how that men should know the causes of sickness; and in the second part the remedy and help for the same. The cause of sickness, as it appears by this word "Repent," is, that men have by their own folly turned themselves from the truth of God to the error and foolish opinion of man; from true faith to uncertain fables; from virtuous and godly works to uncleanness and corruption of life. Christ, therefore, seeing how the world is in danger, because it hath forsaken the rule and wisdom of God's word, calls it home again to a

better way, bidding it repent; as though he had said, "Turn to a better mind, and leave the accustomed ways; and learn to be wise, and walk in the ways and wisdom appointed by God."

Here appears, also, that the cause of all the dangers that Christ willed his audience to repent of, was their sin and iniquity. The cause of sin was infidelity and accustomed doing of evil. The cause of infidelity and accustomed doing of evil was ignorance or misunderstanding of God's word. The cause of ignorance or misunderstanding of God's word was satan, God's and man's enemy, and man's willing consent to the devilish sophistry and false construing of God's word. And from these causes spring all diseases and sickness, death and everlasting damnation; from which, Christ was sent by God's inestimable love towards us, to redeem and save us. Notwithstanding, these effects of pestilence, sickness, death, and everlasting damnation, cannot be removed, except, first, the causes of them be eschewed.*

Wherefore, learn ye, and teach others to know the causes abovementioned, and, also, how they may be removed; for as long as they work their proper nature in man, so long will they bring forth their natural effects, sickness, troubles, death, and damnation. The original cause of all evil was satan, and the ungodly consent of our forefather Adam in paradise, in crediting the devil's sophistry and gloss more than the plain and manifest word of God. And the remedy of this cause is God, who, of love, against satan's hatred, promised in the Seed of the woman, help again for man; and that every man that believes the devil, in evil, must repent and believe God and his word, in good.

Ignorance and mistaking of God's word are the second cause of evil; the remedy whereof is knowledge and right understanding of God's word.

Infidelity and accustomed doing of evil, are the third cause of evil; true faith and accustomed doing of good, remedies them.

Sin and iniquity are the causes of sickness, death, and damnation; virtue and godliness heal and remove them, that they shall not bring man to everlasting death. Although sin and sickness be not wholly taken from man,

* Avoided, refused.

yet God in Christ takes away the damnation of sin, and suffers death to destroy by sickness no other thing than the body of the sinner, so that he use this remedy, "Repent, and believe the gospel;" and he shall at length call the body, dead by death, out of the earth, and place it alive with the soul in heaven.

But now to use this help and remedy against the pestilence, which Christ calleth "Repent, and believe the gospel." The sick man must remember what the first word, "Repent," means, and how he may come by it. Repentance that God requires, is the return of the sinner from sin, unto a new life in Christ; which return is an innovation and renovation of the mind of man by God's Spirit in Christ, with denial of the former life, to begin a new and better life. And this repentance springs from the knowledge of sin by the law of God. From the knowledge of sin comes the hatred of sin; from the hatred of sin proceeds the leaving and departure from sin. From the departure from sin comes, by faith through Christ's blood, remission of sin. From remission of sin comes our acceptance into God's favour. From our acceptance into God's favour, come the gifts of the Holy Ghost to do and work the will of God by virtuous life. From the doing the will of God in Christ, come God's defence and favour, that take from us all plagues and pestilence. From the deliverance from plagues and pestilence comes everlasting life, as Christ saith; and as this medicine, which is called, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," declares.

There are, also, many that are sick and in great danger and peril by reason of sin, and yet feel not the sore and grief thereof. Therefore, they care not whether they seek for any remedy or not; and for lack of taking heed they fall daily to more wickedness than others. Wherefore, it is the office of every minister of the church, diligently, and especially in the time of pestilence and plagues, to call upon the people for amendment of life, and to show them truly, diligently, and plainly, this medicine of repentance, which consists of these parts. First, in the knowledge of sin; secondly, in hatred of sin; thirdly, in forsaking of sin; fourthly, in believing the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake; and, fifthly, to live in virtuous and godly life, to honour God, and to show his obedience to God's law, which is transgressed by sin.

And these parts of penance,* which are the very true and only medicines against sickness and sin, are known only by God's laws; for by the law of God sin is known, detested and forsaken. If it be heard or read by men that pray unto God, they may understand it. Faith, also, believes that remission of sin is showed, opened, and offered by the gospel; wherein are contained God's merciful promises towards sinners; and those promises sinners receive by faith, who believe that whatsoever God has promised in Christ he will perform it. Faith credits and receives forgiveness of sins by the operation of God's Holy Spirit in the poor sinner. The sinner studies and lives a virtuous life, being led by the Holy Ghost, and works to serve God with such works as God's holy commandments command every true christian man to work and to do. And for the better assurance and further establishing of his repentance and acceptance into the favour of God by believing the gospel, the poor sinner uses and receives the holy sacrament of Christ's precious body and blood, in remembrance that Christ died to be his medicine against sin, and the effect thereof.

Wherefore, now that it pleases God for our offences to show by plagues and sickness how he is offended; let us all, that are ministers of the church, and the watchmen of the people, call upon them diligently to "repent and believe the gospel," and to live a godly and virtuous life, that for Christ's sake he may mercifully turn his plagues from us; and give us his most gracious favour to preserve his universal church, our most godly sovereign lord and king, king Edward the Sixth, his majesty's most honourable council, and the whole realm. So be it.

May 18, 1553.

* The word penance is often used by the Reformers in the same sense with repentance.

CERTAIN COMFORTABLE EXPOSITIONS

OF THE CONSTANT MARTYR OF CHRIST,

JOHN HOOPER,

BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND WORCESTER,

Written in the Time of his Tribulation and Imprisonment,

UPON THE

TWENTY-THIRD, SIXTY-SECOND, SEVENTY-THIRD, AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH

PSALMS

OF THE PROPHET DAVID.

Whoso continueth to the end shall be saved.—MATT. xxiv.

AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

The Argument or Matter which the Prophet chiefly treateth of in this Psalm.

It should seem, by the marvellous and wonderful description and setting forth of almighty God by the prophet and king David in this psalm, that he was inflamed with the Holy Ghost, being delivered from all his enemies, to declare unto the world how faithful and mighty a defender and keeper God is, of as many as put their trust in him. He was in great danger, and specially in the wars that he made against the Ammonites, the event and success whereof, it seems, by the twentieth psalm, his subjects greatly feared: wherefore they commended their king (as true subjects always use) with earnest prayer unto God. And that battle, and many other dangers more, ended, wherein the godly king found always the protection and defence of the heavenly Father ready and at hand; and now being at rest, he would have this merciful defence of God known to all others, that as he, in all his adversities, put his trust in the Lord, and had the upper-hand of all his enemies; even so, by his example, all other men should learn to do the same, and assure themselves to find, as he found, the Lord of heaven to be the succour and defence of the troubled, and their keeper from all evil.

And because the hearers and readers of this his most divine and godly hymn should better understand the same, and sooner take credit thereof in the heart, in this psalm, he calls the heavenly Father—the God of all consolation—

a shepherd or herdman feeding his flock; and the people, with himself, he calls sheep pastured and fed by the shepherd. And by these two means, as by a most convenient allegory, or translation fit for the purpose, from the office of a shepherd and the nature of sheep, he sets out marvellously the safeguard of man by God's providence and good will towards man. And in the same allegory or translation he occupies the four first verses in this psalm. In the first verse, and so to the end of the psalm, he declares still one matter and argument of God's defence towards man, and how man is preserved; but yet it seems that he expresses the same by other words, and by another translation, showing the nature of God almighty, in feeding and nourishing of man, under the name of a Lord or King, that has prepared a table and plenty of meats to feed the hungry and needy. And he sets forth man as poor, and destitute of consolation and necessary help, under the name of guests and folks bidden to a king's table; where is plenty of all things necessary, not only to satisfy hunger and to quench thirst, but also to expel and remove them; that the poor man shall never hunger nor thirst again: and not only that, but also for ever, world without end, this poor man shall dwell and inherit, by the mercy of his heavenly King, joys everlasting. And this last translation or allegory is in manner not only a repetition of the first in other words, but also a declaration and more plain opening of the prophet's mind, what he meaneth in this celestial hymn.

I.—Who it is that hath the Cure* and Charge of Man's Life and Salvation.

Verse 1.—*The Lord feedeth me, and I shall want nothing.*

King David saith, the Lord feedeth him: wherefore he can lack nothing to live a virtuous and godly life.

In this first part some things are to be considered: first, of God that feedeth; and next, of man that is fed. God that feedeth, David calls by the name of a 'Shepherd,' and his people he calls by the name of 'sheep.' By this name of a Shepherd the prophet opens and discloses the nature of God to all his miserable and lost creatures, that he is not content, only to wish and desire man that is lost to

* Care.

be found and restored, but also seeks and travails to restore and bring him home again: as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, (chap. xl.) "He shall gather together his lambs in his arm." And in Ezekiel the prophet, (chap. xxxiv.) the Lord saith, "Behold, I will require my flock of the shepherds, &c. And I will deliver my flock from their mouth, and they shall be no more their meat: for thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will search out my sheep, and will visit them, as a shepherd doth visit his sheep when he is in the midst of his scattered sheep; so will I visit my sheep, and deliver them from all places where they have been scattered." And Jeremiah the prophet, (chap. xxxi.) in the same sort declares the nature of God towards the lost flock, saying: "He that dispersed Israel shall gather him together again, and keep him as the shepherd keepeth his flock." Christ our Saviour names himself a good Shepherd, and saith (John x.) that he was sent to call such as were not sheep, of the outward mark and sign in the world, to be his sheep. This nature of the heavenly Father, king David saw, when he said, at the beginning of this heavenly hymn, "The Lord feedeth me," &c.

When he is assured of God's merciful nature, who seeks the lost sheep, he opens further the nature of God, what he will do with the sheep which he finds—"feed him," saith the prophet David, and puts himself for an example. Here is the mercy of the great Shepherd further declared, that he kills not his sheep, robs them not, but feeds and nourishes them. Of this speaks the prophet Ezekiel (chap. xxxiv.) in the person of almighty God: "I myself will feed my sheep, and make that they shall rest quietly, saith the Lord God. That which is lost I will seek, such as go astray I will bring again, such as be wounded I will bind up, such as be weak I will make strong; but such as be fat and strong, those will I root out; and I will feed my sheep in reason and judgment." And the great Shepherd Christ saith, (John x.) "Whether his sheep go in or out, they shall find pasture."

After that this king has opened in this hymn, that God's nature is not only to seek the lost sheep, but also, when he has found him, to feed him; then he adds, after what sort he feeds him: "So that I shall lack nothing," saith the prophet. Here is the declaring of the great Shepherd's pasture, wherewith he feeds the flock of his pasture. Christ expresses the same wonderfully, in the

opening of his office and doctrine unto the world in St. John, (x.) by saying; "I came that they might have life, and have it most abundantly." And talking with the poor woman of Samaria, he told her that the drink he would give her should be water of life. And to the Capernaites he said, that the meat which he would give them should work eternal salvation. As these properties are in God the Shepherd, as the prophet hath marked, even in the like sort are the contrary conditions in man, the sheep he speaks of; for as the nature of God is to seek, so is the nature of man to go astray. As the prophet saith, (Psalm cxix.) "I have strayed like a wandering sheep." And even so Isaiah writes of all mankind: (chap. liii.) "All we have erred, as sheep going astray." Christ our Saviour also, in St. Matthew, (chap. ix.) bewails the people of the world, that stray as sheep that have no shepherd. St. Peter likewise saith unto his countrymen that he wrote unto, (1 Peter ii.) "Ye were as sheep that went astray; but ye be converted now unto the Shepherd and Pastor of your souls."

As the nature of man is to stray from God, so is it likewise to feed upon all unwholesome and infected pastures: to believe every false prophet that can do nothing but lie. (1 Kings xxii.) In the prophet Isaiah, (chap. xxviii.) the Lord saith, "The nature of sheep is to be deceived, and their pastors to be drunk, that neither know nor see the pastures of the word of God." And in the same prophet, (chap. xxix.) there is a most horrible plague upon man for sin; for, "The pastors shall be unable to feed, and all the food of life shall be as a book fast clasped and shut."

This going astray and feeding upon evil pasture, is wonderfully set forth by St. Paul: (2 Thess. ii.) for when men will not feed upon the truth, it is God's just judgment that they should feed upon falsehood. And as God's nature is not only to feed, but fully to satisfy and to replenish with all goodness, so that nothing may be wanting for a godly and virtuous life; (John vi.) in like manner the nature of man is not only to feed, but also to fill itself with all infected and contagious doctrine, until he despise and contemn God and all his wholesome laws. (Rom. i.) This we may see in the holy prophet Isaiah: "The people (saith the Lord) provoketh me unto anger, a lying nation, that will not hear the law of God; they say to their prophets, Prophesy not, look not out for us things that be

right, speak pleasant things unto us," &c. (chap. xxx.) And this replenishing of man with corrupt pasture is horribly set forth in St. John, (chap. vii.) when the wicked priests and pharisees would not believe the Shepherd's voice, Christ, no, not their own servants that told them the truth, nor yet Nicodemus, one of their own court and profession. Thus, in the first part of this celestial hymn, is the nature of God and man described, under the name of a shepherd and of sheep.

Of this part of the psalm, what the prophet hath said of God and of man, we must, for our own doctrine and learning, gather some things to be the better by; for St. Paul saith, "Whatsoever is written, is written for our learning." Two things we learn of this first place: the one, a certainty that God hath the care and charge of us: and the other, a consolation and comfort that we and all ours are under his protection and governance. The first doctrine, to be certain and sure of God's defence, and care over us, makes us constant and strong to suffer and bear all adversities and troubles that God shall send us. And the second doctrine shall cause us patiently and thankfully to bear our cross, and to follow Christ. Both these doctrines the prophet David expresses in the third and fourth verse of this psalm: "If I should (saith he) travel and pass through places contagious and infected, where appears nothing but the image and shadow of death, or be compelled to pass through the hands and tyranny of mine enemies, I will not fear; for thou art with me, O God, and defendest me." In the ninety-first psalm he sets forth the assurance and felicity of all those who put their whole trust in the mercy of God; and there also the prophet reckons up a wonderful sort of dangers, and lays them before the eyes of the faithful, that he may, by the sight and knowledge of the dangers, fix and place the more constantly his faith and trust in God, that has the charge and cure of him: "He shall (saith he) defend us from pestilence most infectious: from flying arrows in the day," &c. By which the prophet understands all kind of evils, that may come unto us by the means of the devil or of wicked men; and these things the faithful shall escape (saith the prophet), because they say from their hearts unto God, "For thou art my hope;" even as he said in the beginning of this psalm, "The Lord feedeth me, and I shall want nothing." Such certainty and

assurance of God's defence, and such consolation in the troubles of this life, we must learn and pray to have out of God's word, or else it were as good never to hear or to read it.

And from this first part of the psalm every estate of the world may learn wisdom and consolation. If the Lord feed and govern him, he shall have God for his master and teacher, who shall give him wholesome and commodious doctrine, fit for the state of the life he has chosen to live in this world. For all that shall be saved in time to come follow not one kind of life. Some are magistrates and rulers, and appointed to see both the laws of the realm, and the goods and commodities thereof, to be used and applied to the use and profit of such as are under them. Some give themselves to study and contemplation of heavenly and divine things, not busying themselves with travails of the body, but to know themselves the way of life, and to be teachers of the same to others. Some are given to apply the laws of the commonwealth; some to exercise the trade and course of merchandise; some one kind of living, and some another. But of what art, faculty, science, or kind of living soever he be, which is not contrary to God's honour or honesty, he may therein serve God, observe justice, exercise truth, keep temperance, and be acceptable to God; who has given laws fit and convenient, to publicans and soldiers, servants and masters, parents and children, husbands and wives, and so to all others. But all these sorts of people most assuredly know that in each of these vocations are more dangers, than he that must live in them is able to bear; therefore, from the bottom of his heart he must be assured of this beginning of king David's hymn: "The Lord feedeth me, and I shall lack nothing." And indeed the Lord hath not only said he will feed and defend him from all dangers; but also saith, he will teach him how to live virtuously and reverently towards God, and honestly and quietly towards man, what state or vocation soever he choose to live in, so it be not against God's laws, and the law of nature. So saith king David: "God hath appointed a law to rule and teach the man that feareth him whatsoever kind of living he appointeth himself to live in." (Psalm xxv.) What treasure is there to be compared unto this, that man is not only fed and maintained by God, but also taught and instructed in every craft* and science that he appoints

* Business.

himself to live in? Blessed, therefore, is the man that, in the deep cogitations of his heart, can say, believe, and feel this to be true that David saith: "The Lord ruleth me, and careth for me, and I shall lack nothing."

But as yet there is almost nothing spoken, of what this king would have chiefly known. Howbeit doubtless they are wonderful things, that preserve and teach all persons, both men and women, in whatsoever kind of living honestly they appoint themselves to live in. He himself knew this to be true right well, as it appears when he saith: "Blessed be the Lord my strength, that taught my hands to battle:" (Psalm cxliv.) for if the Lord had not taught and ruled him, he had been overthrown many times, because there was not only more strength than he had of himself against him, but also more wit, more policy, more experience.

But what things can overcome that man, who is covered with this shield, "The Lord ruleth me?" Doubtless, nothing at all, whether it be in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in hell under the earth. Notwithstanding, this is not all that this doctrine, "The Lord ruleth me," doth for the poor sheep that is ruled. But here must the reader and hearer of this psalm follow king David, and desire to have the eyes of his mind purged and made clean; for if the scales of infidelity, and the love and delight to sin remain, or if the mind be otherwise occupied than upon the understanding of the hymn; he shall hear it, or sing it, as the ungodly colleges of priests do, that daily roar the holy scriptures out of their mouths, and understand no more the meaning thereof, than the walls which they sing and speak unto.* We must, therefore, do as king David did, lift up the eyes of our minds unto Heaven, and fix our faith (as he saith) fast in the Lord; (Psalm xxv.) and then shall we see the unspeakable treasures and wisdom that lie hid in this marvellous and comfortable head and beginning of this psalm, "The Lord feedeth me," &c.

Our Saviour Christ opens plainly in St. John, what it is to be the sheep of God, and to be fed by him, and saith, "They will hear the Shepherd's voice, but no stranger's voice; and because they hear the Shepherd's voice, the Shepherd will give them everlasting life; and no man shall take them out of the Shepherd's hands." There is the greatest treasure and most necessary riches for the sheep of God uttered, which is not only that the

* The Romish Latin service.

knowledge of God be preserved in this life, and to lack nothing that is expedient and necessary for the preservation thereof; but also to understand which ways the heavenly Father teaches and leads us to the mansion and dwelling-place of life everlasting. And if man were wise, he might soon perceive how much the life to come is better than the life present; yea, be it ever so favourably fed and preserved by the heavenly Father, our Shepherd and Governor; for his tuition* here of us, although it be sure, and so strong that none can take us out of his hands, yet our safeguard and life is troubled and mingled with adversities, subject to persecution, and also unto death; but, in the life to come, God's tuition is all joy, all mirth, all solace, with all perpetuity and endless felicity. And of this treasure David chiefly meant in the beginning of the psalm, when he said, "And I shall lack nothing;" for we see, until this life be taken from us, most troubles and most cares begin and tarry in the house of God among his sheep, which are as lambs among wolves. (1 Pet. iv.) Wherefore, the voice and teaching of the Shepherd doth heal the minds of the sheep, (Matt. x.) God's dear elect, and pulls from them all unprofitable fear and carefulness; it quenches all flames of lust and concupiscence; it makes and gives a man a noble and valiant mind to contemn all worldly things; it brings a man into love with God's true honour, makes him joyful in trouble, quiet in adversity, and sure that the end of God's people shall be glorious and joyful; and, also, that this favour of the Shepherd shall be his guide into the place of bliss; where are crowns of everlasting glory, for such as have been led by the Lord: and there they shall lack nothing; for there is neither eye can see, nor tongue can speak, nor mind can comprehend these joys and glory. And, therefore, the prophet both constantly and cheerfully said, "The Lord feedeth me, and I shall lack nothing;" for all things of this world are but trifles, in comparison of things to come.

Although it is a singular favour of God to understand his goodness and mercy towards us, in things belonging to this life, yet it is not to be compared to the other, as David wonderfully declares in the twenty-fifth psalm. When he has numbered a great many of God's benefits, which he bestows upon his poor servants in this life, he in the

* Care.

end makes mention of one especially, that passes them all, in these words: "The Lord opens to such as fear him his secrets and his testament. The Lord opens to his faithful servant the mysteries and secrets of his pleasure, and the knowledge of his laws." And these treasures, the knowledge and right understanding of God's most holy word, he saith, were more sweet unto him than honey or the honeycomb, and he esteemed the virtue of it more than precious stones. Of all gifts this was the principal, that God gave unto him a right and true knowledge of himself. Wherefore, it shall be most expedient and necessary for every christian man to labour, study, and pray, that he may earnestly, and with a faithful heart, know himself to be no better than a silly poor sheep, that has nothing of himself, nor of any other, to save his body and soul but only the mercy of his Shepherd, the heavenly Father; and to be assured, also, that his only mercy and goodness alone in Christ, and none other besides him, is able to feed him; so that he shall lack nothing necessary in this life, nor in the life to come.

II.—Wherein the Life and Salvation of Man consists.

Ver. 2. *He shall feed me in pleasant pastures, and he shall lead me by the river's side.*

He shall set me in the most pleasant and rich pastures of his doctrine, and in the contemplation of heavenly things, wherewith the minds of godly men are nourished and fed with unspeakable joy; and near unto the plenteous floods of the Holy Ghost, and the sweet waters of the holy scriptures, he will feed me; in which places the sheep of the Lord are nourished unto eternal life, abounding with milk, and bringing forth most blessed fruit. The scripture of God useth this word "feed" in many significations: (John xx. Acts xx. Jeremiah iii. Ezek. xxxiv. 2 Sam. v. vii. Mic. v.) sometimes to teach and instruct, sometimes to rule and govern, as magistrates rule their people as well by law as by strength: sometimes to punish and correct. But in this place the prophet uses 'feeding' as well for instruction by God's word, as also for defence and safeguard of God's people by God's most mighty

power. He uses this word 'pasture' for the word of God itself, as a thing which is the only food of a man's soul to live upon, (John x. Psalm lxxiv. lxxix. xcv. Jer. iii. Ezek. xxxiv. Joel i. Matt. iv.) as the meat and drink is for the body. He uses this word 'lead' for conducting, that the man which is led, at no time go out of the way, but always may know where he is, and whither he is going; as in many other of his psalms he uses the same manner of speaking. The 'rivers of refreshment' he uses for the plentiful gifts of the Holy Ghost, wherewith the faithful man is replenished. (Psalm xvi. xxxvi.) His saying, therefore, is as if he had spoken without allegory or translation thus: "He instructs me with his word, and conducts me with his Holy Spirit, that I cannot err or perish." (Rev. vii. Isaiah iv. John iv. vii.)

In this part of the psalm are many things worthy to be noted. First, it is declared, that the life of man consists in the food of God's word; then, that there is none that gives the same to be eaten but God our heavenly Shepherd; the next, that none can eat of this meat of God's word, but such as the Holy Ghost feeds with the word. Our Saviour Christ declares, that "man liveth not by bread alone, but of every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. iv.) Whereby he teaches us, that as the body lives by external meats, so the soul lives by the word of God.

And it is no more possible for a man to live in God without the word of God, than in the world without the meat of the world. And St. Peter confesses the same; for when the Capernaites, and many of Christ's own disciples, had satisfied their bodies with earthly food, they cared not for their souls, neither could they abide to be fed, nor to hear the food of the soul spoken of. Although Christ dressed it most wholesomely with many godly and sweet words, they would not tarry until Christ had made that food ready for them; they could be contented to feed their bellies with his meats, but their souls they would not commit to his diet, but departed as hungry as they came, through their own folly. Christ was leading them from the five barley loaves and two fishes, wherewith they had satisfied their hunger, unto the pleasant pastures of the heavenly word, that showed neither barley loaves nor fish, but his own precious blood and painful passion, to be the meat of their souls; howbeit, they could not come into

this pasture, nor taste the sweet herbs and nourishment of their souls. When Christ perceived they would not be led into this pleasant pasture, he let them go whither they would, and to feed upon what pasture they would. And then he asked of his twelve that tarried, saying, "Will ye depart also?" Peter, as one that had fed both body and soul, as his fellows had, perceived that the body was but half the man, and that being fed, there was but half a man fed; and, also, that such meats as went into the mouth, satisfied no more than the body which the mouth was made for. He felt, moreover, that his soul was fed by Christ's doctrine, and that the hunger of sin, the wrath of God, the accusation of the law, and the demand and claim of the devil, were quenched and taken away. He perceived, likewise, that the meat which brought this nourishment, was the heavenly doctrine that Christ spake of, touching his death and passion. He understood, also, that this meat passed not into the body by the mouth, but into the soul by faith, and by the presence of God's Spirit with his spirit; that the body also should be partaker as well of the grace that was in it, as of the life; so that he felt himself not only to have a body and a soul alive, but also that they were graciously replenished with the pastures and food of God's favour. Wherefore he said unto Christ, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of everlasting life:" which words, in effect, sound no otherwise than this psalm, where David saith, "The Lord feedeth me, and I shall want nothing; for he leadeth me into his pleasant pastures, and pastureth me by the river's side." Wherein it appears manifestly, that the word of God is the life of the soul.

The prophet David marvellously opens this thing in repeating so many times the word of God, in a psalm worthy much reading, and more marking of the things contained therein. For he treateth all the psalm through, that a godly life consists in the observation of God's laws; and therefore he so many times, in the 119th Psalm, prays God to illuminate and endue his spirit and heart with these two virtues, knowledge and love of his word, wherewith he may both know how to serve God, and at all times to be acceptable unto him. And our Saviour Christ himself, in St. Luke, saith unto a woman, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." (chap. xi.) And in St. John, Christ exhorts all men to the

reading and exercising of the scriptures. (chap. v.) For the ignorance of God's word brings with it a murrain and rot of the soul; yet for the sins of the people he said God would send hunger and famine amongst them, not a hunger of bread nor water, but of hearing God's word. (Amos viii.) King David therefore, as one assured both of the Author of life, and also of the food wherewith the life is maintained, stays himself with God's benediction and favour, that he is assured God feeds him with his word. And he shows also, that none is the author of this word, neither can any give it, but God alone; for when the first fall of Adam and Eve, by eating forbidden meats, had poisoned and infected both body and soul with sin and God's displeasure, so that he was destitute both of God's favour and wisdom, none but God could tell him where remedy and help lay; nor yet could any deliver him the help but God. For till God made promise that the Seed of a woman should make whole and save that, which the devil and man had made sick and lost, by reason of sin, and also made open the remedy unto Adam, and inclined his heart to believe the remedy, Adam was dead in sin, and utterly cast away. Then the pity of the heavenly Shepherd said, he should, notwithstanding, in time be brought into the same pasture again, and none should deceive him, nor bring him any more out of the pastures of life. (John x.)

But only God gave this meat, which was his holy word and promise, and also the mouth of faith to eat these promises of God's only gifts. (Eph. ii.) And the same appears throughout the whole Bible, that only God, by sending of his word and preachers, brought knowledge of everlasting life to the people that were in ignorance. As St. Paul saith, (Heb. i.) God beforetime spake unto our fathers by the prophets, and in these latter days unto us by his Son, and after the ascension of his Son, by his apostles and evangelists, (Matt. xxviii.) insomuch that none of the prophets ever spake of God's word, that maintained the life of the soul, otherwise than they received it of the high Shepherd, almighty God, as St. Peter saith: (2 Pet. i.) "Prophecy came not by the will of man, but the holy men of God spake as they were taught by the Holy Ghost;" so that God is the only author and fountain of his true word, the food of all men's souls. (James i.) In like manner, he is the only giver of the same; as

he is the giver of it, and none but himself, so none can eat it but such as have the same delivered unto them by the Holy Ghost. So our Saviour Christ likewise, in the gospel of St. John, (chap. iii.) told Nicodemus that it was not possible to understand and to know the grace of redemption, except he were born from above. And when St. Paul preached the word of God at Philippi, amongst the women by the waterside, the Lord opened the heart of Lydia to understand the things spoken by Paul. (Acts xvi.) And when Christ preached among the Jews, and wrought wonderful miracles, yet they understood nothing, neither were they any the better. And Christ shows the cause: "Therefore ye hear not, because ye are not of God." (John viii.) But the fault was not in God, but in the obstinacy and frowardness of their own hearts, as you may see in St. Matthew. (chap. xxiii.)

Christ offered himself, but yet the malice of man rebelled at all times. St. Paul to the Corinthians wonderfully sets forth man's inability, and saith, "The natural man is not able to comprehend the things that be of God." (1 Cor. ii.) And in St. John, Christ saith, "No man can come unto him except the heavenly Father draw him, for they must be all taught of God." (John vi.) Now, as the prophet saw these things for himself and his salvation in God's word, even so must every christian man take heed that he learn the same doctrine, or else it were no advantage to have the scripture of God delivered and taught unto us. And every reader and hearer must learn by this psalm, that there is no other food or meat for the soul but God's word; and whosoever refuses it when it is offered or preached, or, when they know the truth thereof, do yet of malice, fear, lucre, and gain of the world, or any other way, repugn* it, are unworthy of all mercy and forgiveness. Let every man and woman therefore examine their own consciences without flattering themselves, and they shall find that the most part of this realm of England, in the time of our holy and blessed king Edward the sixth, were fed with this holy food of God's word; or else might have been fed with it; for it was offered and sent unto them, as well by most godly statutes and laws of parliament, as by many noblemen and virtuous learned preachers. If they fed not upon it accordingly, or now

* Resist.

their teeth stand on edge, and their stomachs are cloyed with it, to their peril be it. Thus Christ saith: "They have nothing whereby justly to excuse themselves of their sin." (John xv.) And likewise he saith, that whosoever hateth him, hateth also his Father; by which words it appears manifestly, that no man can hate Christ's doctrine but he must hate Christ himself; and no man can hate Christ, but he must also hate the Father of heaven. Wherefore, it is expedient for every man to mark such places; for it was not Christ's name, nor Christ's person, that the Jews so mortally hated Christ for, but they hated him to death for his doctrine sake; and it was Christ's doctrine that condemned the world, and showed the life and learning of the world to be evil, and could not abide the light of God's word; (John iii.) and, therefore, in no case they could abide to hear of it, as you see the like in his poor preachers. For his word's sake they are less thought of than dogs or brute beasts, for they are hated to death; and Barabbas, the murderer, finds more favour than Peter, the preacher of Christ, who would lead the flock, redeemed with Christ's precious blood, into the pastures of God's word, with the prophet David. And yet, in this hatred of God's word, the food of God's sheep, they would be seen, and none but they, to love and honour God; but it is not so in their hearts; for they have a contempt of God, as their fruits well declare. And Christ saith, they hate both him and his Father, yea, and that without cause.

But thou, christian reader, see thou feed thy soul with no other meat, than with the wholesome pastures of God's word, whatsoever the world shall say or do. (Psalm xxxvi.) Look upon this text of St. John, (chap. xv.) "When the Comforter shall come, whom I shall send from my Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify and bear record of me." Weigh that place, and think wherefore the Son of man referred himself to the witness of the Holy Ghost, and you shall know that it was for no untruth that was in the author, being Christ, or in the doctrine that he preached, but only to make the disciples to be of good comfort, and that they should not esteem the gospel he preached unto them any thing the less, although it had many adversaries and enemies, and was spoken against in a manner every where. For against the fury and false judgment of the world that contemned

the gospel, they should have the testimony of the Holy Ghost to allow and warrant the gospel.

Let us, therefore, pray to the heavenly Shepherd, that he will give us his Holy Spirit, to testify for the word of God, the only food of our souls, that it is true what God saith, and only good what he appoints to feed us. And this we may be assured of, that in this heavy and sorrowful time there is nothing can testify for the truth of God's word, and keep us in the pleasant pasture thereof, but the very Spirit of God, which we must set against all the tumults and dangers of the world; for if we make this verity of God subject to the judgment of the world, our faith shall quail and faint every hour, as men's judgments vary. Wherefore, let us pray to have always in us the spirit of adoption, whereby, when our faith shall be assaulted, we may cry, "Father, Father!" And the same help for the maintenance of the truth God promised by his holy prophet Isaiah (chap. lix.), saying, "This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit which is in thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thy mouth, nor from the mouth of thy seed, nor from the mouth of the seed of thy seed, from henceforth until the world's end."

Here the almighty God sets forth what a treasure and singular gift his word is, and that it shall not depart from his people until the world's end. And in these words is this part of David's psalm marvellously opened and set forth. "It is the Lord alone that feeds and instructs," saith Isaiah the prophet; it was not man's own imagination and intention, nor the wisdom and religion of his fathers, whatsoever they were, but it was the Lord that spake, and made the covenant with man, and put his Spirit in man to understand the covenant; and by his word, and no other word, he instructed man, and said, that by this means all men should, till the world's end, feed and eat of God's blessed promises. For in his word he has expressed and opened to every man what he shall have, even the remission of sin, acceptance into his fatherly favour, grace to live well in this life, and, at the end, to be received into everlasting life.

By these things the reader may know what maintains life, even the word of God, as Christ saith: (Matt. iv.) "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what

ye will, and ye shall have it." (John xv. See, also, Psalm xix. cxix. 2 Tim. iii. Heb. i. 1 Pet. i.)

He shall learn also, that it is not general councils nor provincial councils, the determination and agreement of men, that can be the author of this food, but only God. (Gal. i.) And as God is the only author of this food; even so is his Holy Spirit, he that feedeth the poor simple soul of the christian man with his blessed pasture, and not the wisdom of man, men's sacrifices, or men's doings. (John vi. xv. Isaiah lv.) But as touching the food of man's soul, to be the only word of God, I will, if it be God's blessed pleasure, to whom, in the bitter and painful passion of Christ, I commit my will, with my life and death, open unto the sheep and lambs of God, at large in another book.

III.—How Man is brought to the Knowledge of Life and Salvation: which Part showeth what Man is of himself, and how he is brought into this Life, and to feed in the pleasant Pastures of God's Word.

Verse 3. *He shall convert my soul, and bring me into the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake.*

My soul erred and went astray from the right way of godly living, but the Lord converted me from mine errors and faults of living, and brought me to observe his holy laws, wherein are contained all justice, truth, and godliness.

Here is to be noted, what degrees and orders the Lord and heavenly Shepherd doth use, in bringing his sheep unto the pasture of life. First, he converts the man who is gone astray by his wicked ways and sinful manner of living. If he were an infidel, he brings him, first, to know, feel, and hate his infidelity, and, afterwards, to a true faith. If he be a persecutor, he shows him, first, his tyranny, and, afterwards, how to use himself meekly. If he be a sinful man, that lives contrary to his knowledge and profession, he brings him, first, to the knowledge and hatred of his sin, and, afterwards, to the forgiveness of the same. As Christ our Saviour wonderfully teaches in St. John, where

he saith: "The Holy Ghost, when he comes, shall rebuke the world of sin, justice,* and judgment." (chap. xvi.) By which words he declares, that the faithful of God cannot profit in the gospel of Christ, neither love nor exercise justice and virtue, except they are taught, and made to feel, the burden and danger of sin, and are brought to humble themselves, as men that are of themselves nothing but sin. And, therefore, the law and threatenings of God are very wholesome, whose nature and property is to cite and call men's consciences unto the judgment of God, and to wound the spirit of man with terror and fear. Wherefore Christ uses a wonderful way, and teaches the same unto his apostles, that neither himself for that present time, nor they in time to come, could preach profitably the gospel, wherewith men are led into the sweet and pleasant fields of God's promises by his word, except they use this order, to lead them from sin to justice,* and from death to life. And as justice* and life come by Christ, showed unto us in his bitter passion, death, and glorious resurrection; so sin and death both appear, and are felt, by the Spirit of God, showed unto us in the law.

This order also saw the holy prophet, when he saith: "The Lord converteth my soul, and leadeth me into the paths of righteousness." This is a wonderful sentence, and much and deeply to be considered and weighed by the christian man. "The Lord converteth my soul," saith David. He feels in himself, that as long as the devil and sin have the rule and kingdom in man, the soul of man, being God's creature, is deformed, foul, horrible, and so troubled, that it is like unto all things, more than unto God and virtue, whereunto it was created: but when the wicked devil and deformed sin are, by the victory of Christ, overcome and expelled, the soul waxes fair, amiable, sweet, loving, pleasant, and like unto God again, and comes into order and obeisance unto its Creator; and so, brought into the paths of righteousness, it feeds with the rest of God's well-ordered flock upon the pastures and food of his holy word, to do his blessed will.

O that we would, in the glass of God's word, look upon our own souls, when they are in the tyranny of the devil, under the kingdom of sin, as this king did. We should more loath and detest our own souls, and the company that our souls are accompanied by, than if we should,

* Righteousness.

for all our lifetime, be put into styes with hogs, and always be bound, during our life, to live with them, feed as they feed, sleep and wake as they do, and be as they are in all things. Look in the gospel of St. Luke, (chap. xv.) and there you will see a man, by sin so foul, so disordered, so accompanied with swine, so hungerbaned, so rent and torn, so beggarly, so wretched, so vile, so loathsome, and so stinking, that the very swine were better for their condition than he was. But see how the heavenly Shepherd beheld from his heavenly throne, the place of the everlasting joys, this poor strayed sheep, feeding, not among sheep, but among swine, and yet could not be satisfied therewith. And no marvel; for swine eat not the food of sheep, nor yet do sheep fill themselves with hog's draff and swillings; but this Shepherd used his wonted clemency, and struck the heart of his sheep, making him to weep and bewail his condition—a man to come to such dishonour, to be joined and matched with swine, to feed like swine, to eat like swine such meat as swine eat! remembering that the worst in his father's house was a prince and noble king, in comparison and respect of him! Then, also, being persuaded of his father's mercy, he returned, and his father brought him into his pleasant and sweet pastures, and gave him his former favour and accustomed apparel again, as a man to keep company with men, and no more with adulterous men and unclean swine. Howbeit, he came not to his old honour again, till the Lord had practised in him that he practised in this prophet, king David: "He converted and turned my soul."

It is but folly for a man to flatter himself, as though he were a christian man, when his heart and soul is not turned unto the Lord. He shall never feed in the pastures of life, but be a hypocrite all the days of his life, as the most part of the world are, that profess Christ's name at this present day. They say, they are converted from the world to God, when there is nothing within the pastures of God's word but what they will contemn, rather than have as much as an evil look of the world for it. They say they are converted to God, when they are contented, with the world, to honour that for God, which is but bread and wine in the matter and substance; as the scripture of God, and the holy church of Christ, have taught and believed these thousand and five hundred years and more. O Lord! are these men turned to thee? Are these the men that shall

dwell with thee in thy holy mount of Sion, and stand in thy holy place? (Psalm xxiv.) Nay, doubtless, they are not turned to thee, but from thee; and are not with thee, but against thee. They speak with thee, and yet their deeds dishonour thee; they talk of truth, and practise lies! What, good Lord, shall thy simple and poor unlearned sheep do? Where shall they seek thy truth? for the shepherds say and sing this psalm every week, and at every dirge for the dead; and yet they are not converted in their spirits to thee, that thou mightest lead them into the paths of righteousness. But, Lord! there is no man now, in a manner, that dare accuse them—they destroy themselves and thy sheep, and no man can be suffered to remedy it with God's word. Notwithstanding, good Lord, although, in this world, none may accuse them, yet they, in the world to come, shall have king David, whose psalms they daily read, and in whom they most glory, to accuse them, both of heresy and blasphemy, as Moses shall accuse the wicked Jews, whom they most glory of. For as the Jews read the scripture of Moses, and yet were never the better, so these priests of antichrist read the holy scripture, and yet neither the people, nor they themselves, are any thing the better. And in this they pass the abomination of the Jews and Turks; for they were, and yet are, content, that their books of religion shall be used in their churches in the vulgar and common tongue: but these enemies of God and man would not have the word that God has appointed for all men's salvation, to be used in any tongue but in the Latin.

The God, therefore, of peace, that brought again from death to life the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting testament, our Lord Jesus Christ, convert the souls and hearts of all those that cause the sheep of God thus to eat and feed upon the carrion, and infected pastures of men's traditions! Amen.

Now, as king David in this text has wonderfully set forth the miserable nature of all God's sheep, and put himself for an example; that the nature and condition of all men is corrupt, wicked, and damnable, so that it cannot be partaker of God's benediction and everlasting grace, except it be born anew, amended, restored, and instructed; so likewise he shows, that none converts the soul of man, but the heavenly Father, the great Shepherd, who both sees the lost state of his sheep, and willeth of his mercy

the salvation and calling of the sheep home again: and then he proceeds further, and shows what the heavenly Shepherd will do with his sheep. He saith he will lead them into the paths of justice.* Wherein the prophet declares, that it is not only God that converts the man from evil, but also he alone that keeps him in goodness and virtue. And therein is showed a wonderful misery and wretchedness in the soul and body of man, who can neither begin nor yet continue in a life acceptable unto God, except God wholly work the same himself.

And as it declares the wonderful wretchedness of man, so it manifests and sets forth the wonderful and unspeakable mercy and compassion of God towards man, that so marvellously and graciously he can be content to help and save his enemy and very adversary. But herein is required of as many as the Lord converts from iniquity and sinful living, that they walk in the same law, and use their conversation in equity and justice,* as it becomes obedient men and women redeemed with the Shepherd's most precious blood. For the Lord does not teach his sheep the truth, that they should live in falsehood; neither gives he them the remission of their sins, that they should return to the same again: but because they should studiously apply and diligently exercise themselves in virtuous works, to the honour of almighty God. (Psalm i. Matt. v.)

There are two sorts of people whom the Lord will judge and punish in the latter day, with extreme wrath and justice. The one sort are called upon to learn the knowledge of God, and of God's honour, as God's word commands: but they will not hear, nor obey the calling, but only know God, and learn God, as the custom and manner of the world is to know him and learn him, though it be ever so far from the truth. And the other sort are contented to hear and learn to know God, and to serve him as he teaches in his holy and most pure word, but in their hearts consent not to their knowledge; but, contrary to it, they do outward service to a false god, and frame their conversation, both in religion towards God, and their manners towards men, as men of the world do. So that God has no more reverence from him that knows the truth, than from him that is ignorant of the truth.

Isaiah the prophet speaks against the first sort of men, that will not hear when they are called, nor learn when

* Righteousness.

they are taught, and saith: "When other men shall laugh, they shall weep; when others be merry, they shall be sorry; when others be whole, they shall be sick; when other men shall live, they shall die; and when other men rejoice in mirth, they shall lament in sorrow." (chap. lxv.) And good cause why, saith St. Paul: "for the Lord hath stretched forth his hand always to a rebellious and obstinate people, that will not learn nor know his holy will." (Romans x.) Again, the other sort that know and have learned the Lord's will and pleasure, and yet prepare not themselves to do his will, "shall be beaten with many stripes, saith our Saviour Christ. (Luke xii.) And the Lord, in St. Matthew, wonderfully charges both such as ignorantly offend, and those that with knowledge offend; those also that are called upon to amendment in faith and charity, and those that are not called upon by preaching of the truth, and saith: "The greater damnation is upon such as know, or might know, or else when they do know, they are nothing the better for their knowledge." He puts forth their four cities, Chorazin and Bethsaida, Tyre and Sidon: two of them many times admonished by Christ to amend, the other two not so called upon; nevertheless, both of them the Lord will judge, but most severely such as neglect the word of God when it is offered. Therefore, it is not enough for a man to hearken or hear, read or learn God's word, but he must be ruled by God's word, frame his whole life after God's word, and, before all things, avoid idolatry by God's word: as king David saith in this psalm, that the Lord did not only convert his soul, but brought him into the paths of justice.*

Let every man and woman, therefore, think with themselves, what knowledge they have received of God; for he that has received most shall make account for most; and the more he knows and abuses his knowledge, the more shall be his damnation. And, in case they know nothing at all, and are never the better for all the preaching of the Lord's word, let them take heed what persons they are, and in what place they have dwelled. In case their poverty was such that they could not hear, and their dwelling where there was no preaching at all, yet are they under the judgment and damnation of God, because they know not, as Tyre and Sidon were. If they were of such state, as they might have come if they would, and

* Righteousness.

had preachers to tell them the truth, in case they would have heard the truth; such men and women shall be the more in danger of God's severe and just judgment. For God not only takes an account of that which men have received, if they use not God's gifts well, but also straitly requires of those, who might have learned, the thing which either willingly or obstinately they refused to learn; as you may see by Chorazin and Bethsaida. God will as well take an account of him that refused to receive the gift of God's word, as he requires an account of him that has received it, and abused it. Whereby we learn, that not only the man that abuses God's word shall be damned, but also he that will not learn God's word. (Matt. xi. Luke xii.) King David had the word offered; he received it, and was carried thereby into the paths of justice, and lived godly thereafter. Now he goes forth, and shows wherefore man is brought to life and salvation.

IV.—Wherefore Man is brought to Life and Salvation.

Verse 3 continued.—*For his name's sake.*

He brought not me to life and salvation, saith the prophet, for any merits or deservings of mine, but for his own infinite goodness' sake; and whatsoever evil has been done, and sin committed, I ascribe to my corrupt nature, and accuse myself to be the doer of them. But if any thing has been thought, said, or done, that is virtuous and godly—that I wholly ascribe and attribute unto the mercy of God, who gave me a good mind to wish to do well, and also strength to do the things that he gave me will to wish.

Of this part of the psalm we learn, that man can neither wish nor speak, nor do any thing, nor yet understand any thing that is good, but only through the mercy of God; who makes of an ignorant man a man of knowledge, of an unwilling man a willing man, of an evil speaker a good speaker, and of an evil doer a good doer. Therefore St. Paul, when he sees that the nature of man will take upon it to be the author of any good thing, accuses and condemns it of arrogance and pride, saying, "What hast thou that thou

hast not received? If thou hast received, why dost thou glory as though thou receivedst not?" (1 Cor. iv.) And in the same epistle he saith, that he "preached Christ crucified, which was a slander to the Jews, and a foolishness to the Gentiles;" (1 Cor. i.) "yet, saith he, the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." And that king David had good experience of, when he said, "The Lord ruleth me, and I lack nothing; he putteth me in a sweet pasture, and leadeth me by the river's side; he turneth my soul, and conducteth me into the way and path of justice, for his name's sake, and for his mercy's sake." He saw the devil, the world, his flesh, and sin, all conquered by the power of God, and for his name's sake was brought both to live, and also to live virtuously, to his honour that gave the life, and to his own salvation that received the life.

All our teaching for a great many years, and also your whole labours, have been chiefly to know the misery of man, and the mercy of almighty God. Wherefore, it shall not need to tarry long in opening this place of the psalm; for you are rich in God in these two points—God give you grace well to use them. Yet in any case we must remember, that our souls are turned from sin, and we are accepted as the people of everlasting life, only for God's mercy's sake. So king David wonderfully opens unto us in the thirty-second psalm, where he saith, "Blessed be they whose sins are forgiven, and whose transgressions be covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin." Of which words we learn, that the godly king called those happy and blessed, not that are clean and pure without sin, for there is no such man in this life; but those are blessed, whose sins the mercy of God forgives: and they are only such, as unfeignedly acknowledge their sin, and steadfastly from their hearts believe, that the death and passion of Jesus Christ is the only expiation and cleansing thereof: as St. Paul wonderfully expounds David's words in his epistle to the Romans. (chap. iv.)

The prophet by these words, "For his name's sake," declares, that there is nothing in him, nor in any other man, wherefore God should turn the soul of man from death to life, from error to truth, from the hatred of God to God's love, from wandering astray to a stablished continuance in the verity of God's word, but only God's mercy. And in other of his psalms, always when he treats of

God's mercy and of man's sin, he sets forth man so naked and vile, as a thing most destitute of all health and salvation, and shows that none of these gifts, remission of sin, acceptation unto God's love and favour, pasturing of them with his most blessed word, can happen unto any other, saving unto such as know, and earnestly confess, that they are sinners, and infected with many contagious and dangerous infirmities. And therefore he saith in the second verse of the thirty-second psalm. "Blessed is he to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile." For there is no greater guile, nor more danger in man, than to think himself to be somewhat, when he is nothing in deed; or else to think himself to be of such purity of mind, as though he needed not this free remission and favour of God. And as there is nothing more proud and arrogant than such a mind; so there is nothing in man more detestable and miserable.

On the contrary, they are blessed that hunger and thirst for justice ;* for, "God filleth the hungry with good things, but the proud he sendeth away empty." (Matt. v. Luke i.) And this holy prophet knew right well, that it was humility, and the casting down of himself, that was most acceptable unto God, and the seeking of health and salvation only for his name's sake ; that is to say, for his mercy promised in the death and passion of his only Son our Saviour Christ.

In the end of the thirty-second psalm, king David, who had thus humbled himself, represents God speaking unto him, while he is thus making his complaint of his corrupt nature and sinful life, and saying in this manner, "I will give thee understanding, and instruct thee in the way thou shalt go, and will have mine eyes ever upon thee." Wherein he declares, that such humbled men and lowly persons, as know their iniquity, shall have understanding of God, and shall not swerve from the right ways, not for their deeds and their deservings, but for his mercy that vouchsafes to instruct and teach them.

And so likewise doth this godly king show in this psalm, "The Lord ruleth me, and I lack nothing; he feedeth me in sweet pastures, and leadeth me by the river's side ; he turneth my soul, and bringeth me into the paths of righteousness; and all for his name's sake." When he has opened the salvation of man, and also the cause thereof,

* Righteousness.

and wherein it consists, he proceeds to the fifth part of his oration* and holy hymn.

V.—What Trouble may happen to such as God giveth Life and Salvation unto.

Verse. 4. *Although I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.*

Seeing I have such a guide and defender, there is no difficulty or peril, or fear of death, that I will make account of. For what harm can death do to him that has God the author of all life with him? Or what can the tyranny of man do, where God is the defender?

In this fifth part king David shows how the Lord God exercises his sheep, whom he feeds with his blessed word, in dangers and troubles; and also how he will defend them in the midst of their troubles, whatsoever they are. In the first words of the fifth part of this sacred and holy hymn, the prophet declares, that the life of God's sheep and people in this world cannot be without dangers and troubles. Therefore Christ saith, that he came to put fire in the world, and that the same fire should burn—meaning, that he came to preach such a doctrine, as should move dissension and discord between friend and friend, the father and the son, and set them at debate. Not that his word is a learning or doctrine of dissension and discord of itself, but that by the malice of men, who cannot abide to be rebuked by the word of God, they will be always at discord and variance with the word of God, and with any friend or foe that teaches it. (Luke xii.) And the same Christ our heavenly Shepherd shows us, both in his doctrine and in his life, who was hated and troubled more than any man before or since his time, and assures all his to have troubles in this world, yea and death also. But it forceth† not; for he saith, "I have overcome the world." (John vii. viii. ix. x. xvi.) And whatsoever the dangers are, and how horrible soever they seem, Christ being with us, we need not to fear. (John xvi.) Therefore in this point the prophet corrects the foolish opinion of man, who

* Prayer. † Overcomes.

would live as one of the sheep of God in this world, but without troubles. It is contrary both to the person that professes God, and also to the religion that he professes; for in the world both shall be as Christ saith, hated: of which hatred come persecution and troubles, so that the people of God shall, whether they will or will not, pass through many dangers, no less perilous than the shadows and very image of death, as here king David showeth in this wholesome and blessed hymn.

And as he saw right well, that the state and condition of God's people and sheep, is to be troubled for Christ and his word: even so did Zechariah the prophet speak of Christ and his people, (Zech. xi.) how that not only the sheep should be troubled and scattered abroad, (Matt. xxvi.) but also that the Shepherd should be stricken with the sword, that both sheep and Shepherd should be condemned in this world. But now, as David and Zechariah declare, that the life and condition of Christ and his sheep are troublous in the world: so do they both declare, that whatsoever the troubles are, they are both known and appointed upon whom they shall fall, and in what time they shall trouble the sheep of God: so that they can come no sooner than God appoints, nor do any more harm than the heavenly Shepherd shall appoint them to do. And this we may see and learn as well in Christ as in his sheep.

How many times did the priests and pharisees conspire Christ's death?—Yet because his time was not come, they had not their purpose: but when the time of God was come, Christ said to his sheep: "Ye shall be all troubled this night for my cause; for the Shepherd shall be stricken, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad." Then, as God had appointed the time, it could be no longer deferred. And because they should not miss him, whose death they sought, he came and met them, and offered himself unto them, and said, that he was the same man, Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought. (John xviii.) And when they had taken him, and had used as much cruelty towards him, as their wicked malice and devilish hatred could devise, they killed him, and made him to pass not only the shadow and image of death, but also death itself. They thought then they had him where they would, and said, "He hath saved others; let him now save himself, if he can." (Matt. xxvii. Mark xv. Luke xxiii. John xix.)

When he was laid in the grave with his fathers, they

thought to execute their plagues and tyranny towards him being dead, purposing that, as they had brought him to death and killed him, so likewise they would keep him down still, that he should never see life again, but rot in the earth like a wretch, until worms had eaten him. And for the performance of this purpose, to do all their wills to the uttermost, they came to Pilate, and said, that the deceiver of the people who was then laid in the grave, made his boast while he was alive, that the third day after his death he would rise again; but if it should be so, it would be worse with them than it was before. "Appoint therefore soldiers," said they, "and watchmen to keep the sepulchre till the third day be past." (Matt. xxvii.) Whilst they yet minded to lay as much evil and contempt upon Christ our Shepherd, as they meant unto him; came the heavenly Father, who suffers no more ignominy to fall upon his, nor will suffer them to continue any longer therein than pleases him, with this inhibition and stay of further proceedings in dishonouring and persecuting his only Son, and as it were said: "Now is come the third day; arise, mine own dear Son buried." And then was the sorrow and contempt of this our persecuted Shepherd not only ended, but also turned into endless and unspeakable joys: he endured with his forefather David most bitter pains, and also most vile death; but he feared not, because God was with him. The same appointment also the heavenly Father has made with all dangers, and troubles that shall happen unto us his poor and afflicted sheep, who are taken daily, as it were, to the shambles, to suffer what God's enemies can devise. But the heavenly Shepherd seeth all their doings out of heaven, and mocketh them to scorn (Psalm ii.): for they shall never do as much as they would, against Christ and his people, but as much as God will suffer them. David afterwards, in his thirty-seventh psalm, teaches us the same with marvellous words and divine sentences: "Lay thy care upon the Lord, and trust in him, and he shall help thee."

It is most necessary, therefore, for every troubled man to know in his mind, and feel in his heart, that there are no troubles that happen unto man, whatsoever they are, or come they by chance or fortune, as many men say and think, but they come by the providence of God. Yea, the very winds of the air, tempests in the clouds, trembling of the earth, raging of the sea, or any other that come, how

sudden or how unlooked-for soever they appear: as you may read in the twenty-ninth psalm, wherein wonderful tempests and troublesome things are spoken of, done in the waters as well as upon the dry land.

But here, alas! is our nature and knowledge much to be lamented and complained upon: for as the knowledge we have of God's favour and gentleness towards us in Christ, for the most part, consists in understanding of the mind and talk with the mouth, but the virtue, strength, and operation of the same favour of God is not sealed in our hearts and consciences: even so the troubles and adversities, which God threatens for sin, are spoken and talked of with the tongue, and known in the mind, but they are not earnestly nor feelingly sealed in our consciences and hearts. And of this comes it, that we neither love God, nor rejoice in his promises as we ought to do, when we hear or read them; neither yet hate sin, nor are sorrowful for God's displeasure, as sin and God's displeasure should be sorrowed and mourned for by christian men. Hereof also comes it, dearly beloved, that we love no further than in knowledge and tongue, nor hate vice but in knowledge and tongue. But, alas! how miserable is this our state and condition, that knows neither life nor death, virtue nor vice, truth nor falsehood, God nor the devil, heaven nor hell, but half as much as they ought to be known of christian men. Read you, therefore, and mark the thirty-seventh psalm, and you shall know, that it is not enough for christian men to understand and speak of virtue and vice, but the virtue must be sealed in the conscience and loved, and the vice kept out of the conscience and hated; as David saith, "Leave doing of evil, and do good:" so likewise he speaks of a feeling christian man, whose conscience has tasted how sweet and amiable God is: "Taste and feel how sweet the Lord is."

And this assure yourselves, that when you feel your sins, and bewail the danger and damnation of them, the Spirit of God hath wrought that feeling, and that troubled and broken heart God will not despise. (Psalm li.) And there is no doubt or mistrust of a sensible and feeling sinner. But in case he can find in himself no love to the obedience of God, nor desire to do his will by hearing of his word, nor any feeling at all of sin, nor desire to be rid from it by hearing of the law; then he has knowledge in the mind, and speech in the mouth, but no consent and

feeling in his heart and conscience. And this knowledge lives with sin, and speaks with virtue; whereas the heart and conscience consents to good, and abhors evil, if the virtue and nature of God's word by God's Spirit be sealed in the conscience. And this St. Paul teaches wonderfully, as well by faith, that comes by hearing of God's word, as also of his precious Supper, the sacrament of his body, and blood, and passion. He saith, that the heart believes to righteousness; (Rom. x.) that is to say, the conscience and heart of him that is sealed, and assured of the virtue and grace of God's promises in Christ, believes to righteousness, or is ascertained and knows itself to be righteous and just before God, because it has consented and received the mercy of God offered in the gospel through the merits of Christ. And then the same faith, which God has sealed in the heart, breaks forth by confession, which confession is a true fruit of faith to salvation, as it is written by St. Paul in the same place.

And where this faith is so kindled in the heart, there can be none other but such a fruit following it; and it is as possible to have fire without heat or flame, as this virtue, faith, without the fruit of well doing. And that is it which St. Paul saith to the Corinthians: "As often as ye eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, show ye the Lord's death until he come." Wherein St. Paul requires a knowledge of Christ in the receiver, not only that he knew in his mind that Christ died for his sin, and the sin of the world, and spoke and declared the same death with his tongue unto others; but this is the chief and most principal advantage of Christ's holy Supper, which men now ungodly call the mass, that the virtue and benefit of Christ's death, as it is appointed for the remission of sins, be sealed and fully consented unto in the conscience. (1 Cor. xi.) And this knowledge of Christ's death, with the assurance of the virtue, strength, and power thereof in the heart, will and ought to inflame us to thanksgiving, and to preach and teach unto others those advantages of Christ's death, which we know and feel first in ourselves within our own spirit and heart.

Thus I have tarried longer than I thought in this matter, because I would bring myself and all others, as much as lieth in me, to feel, that knowledge and talk of virtue and vice, of God's favour and of God's punishment, *is not sufficient.* And to bring myself and all men from

knowledge and talk, to feeling, consenting, and a full surrendering of ourselves unto the profit and advantage of the things which we speak and know; or else knowledge and speaking please not God, nor profit ourselves; as Christ saith, "Not every man that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. vii.) Therefore, David both knew, spoke, and felt in his heart, the favour, help, and assistance of God, to be with him, into whatsoever troubles he should fall, and in that feeling did say he would not fear. But it may be that I have so written of virtue and vice to be known of in the mind, spoken of with the mouth, and felt in the heart, that you may judge and feel yourselves never to have come to this perfection. For this is out of doubt, he that hath God's love and fear thus sealed in his heart, lives in this life rather an angelical life, than the life of a mortal man; and yet it is evident by king David in this psalm, and by his 121st psalm, and in many more, that he was so sure, and so well ascertained of God's present help in his troubles, that he cared nothing for death, or any other adversities that could happen. And, doubtless, we perceive by his psalms in many places, that his faith was as strong as steel, and he trembled not, nor doubted any thing, but was in a manner without all kind of mistrust, and nothing troubled, whatsoever he saw contrary to God's promises; and he passed over them, as things that could not once withdraw his cogitations from the truth and verity of God's promises, which he believed. As Abraham likewise did; he staggered not, but with constancy of faith would have killed his own son, so strong was his faith. (Gen. xxii.)

But as the gift of faith is an incomparable treasure, thus to know and feel that faith overcomes all dangers; so it makes the heart of him that is sealed with such a faith to feel joys and mirth unspeakable. But as this faith is the gift of God, and comes only from him, so is it in him only to appoint the time when it shall come, and how much and how strongly it shall be given; for it is not at all times alike, but is sometimes so strong, that nothing can make the faithful man afraid, no, not death itself. And sometimes it is so strong, that it makes the afflicted man be contented to suffer even death itself, rather than offend God. But yet it is with much conflict, great troubles, many heavy and marvellous cogitations, and sometimes with such a fear, as the man has much

ado to see and feel, in the latter end of his heavy conflict, the victory and upper hand of the temptation. And at another time the christian man shall find such heaviness, oppression of sin, and troubles, that he shall not feel so much as one spark of faith to comfort himself in the trouble of his mind (as he thinks); but that all the floods and dreadful assaults of desperation have their course through his conscience. Nothing feels he, but his own mind and poor conscience, one so to eat the other, that the conflict is more pain to him than death itself. He understands that God is able to do all things; he confesses with the knowledge of his mind, and with his tongue in his head, that God is true and merciful; he would have his conscience and heart agree thereunto, and be quiet; but the conscience is pricked and oppressed with so much fear and doubt of God's wrath for sin, that he thinks God can be merciful unto others, but not unto him. And thus his knowledge, for the time of temptation, rather troubles him than eases him, because his heart does not, or rather cannot, consent unto the knowledge; yet would he rather than his life, he could consent unto God, love God, hate sin, and be God's altogether, although he suffered for it all the pains of the world.

I have known in many good men and many good women this trouble and heaviness of the spirit for the time, as though God had quite hidden himself from the afflicted person, and had wholly forsaken him; yet at length, the day of light from above, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit has appeared, which laid covered under the veil and covert of bitter cogitations of God's just judgments against sins. Therefore, seeing that faith at all times has not like strength in man, I do not speak to discomfort such as at all times find not their faith as strong as David did in this psalm; for I know in the holy saints themselves it was not always alike, but even in them as in others. And although we cannot compare with them in all things in the perfection of their faith, yet may they compare with us in the weakness of our faith, as you may see by the scriptures.

In this psalm and in many others, you may perceive that David, by the constancy and surety he felt in the promises of God, was so strong, so joyful, and comfortable, in the midst of all dangers and troubles of death, that he did not only contemn troubles and death, but also desired death,

and to be dissolved out of this world, as St. Paul and others did. At another time you shall perceive him to be strong in faith, but not so joyful, nor yet the troubles so easy unto him, but that he suffered great battle and conflict with his troubles, and for the cause of all troubles, sin and transgression of God's laws; as you may see in the sixth psalm; where he cried out, "Lord, chasten me not in thy fury, nor punish me in thy wrath: my soul is sore troubled; but how long, Lord, wilt thou defer help?" And of such troubled consciences with conflicts you shall find oftentimes in the book of Psalms, and in the rest of God's scriptures, yet you shall find the end of the temptation to be joyful and comfortable to the weak man that was so sorely troubled; for although God suffer a long fight between his poor soldier and the devil; yet he gives the victory to his servant, as you may see in king David. When he cried out, that both his body and soul were wearied with the cross of God's punishment, yet he said at the last, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping." (Psalm vi.) And in others of his psalms you shall perceive his faith more weak, and his soul troubled with such anguish and sorrow, that it would seem there was no consolation in his soul, nor any show of God's carefulness towards him. In this state you may see him in the thirteenth psalm, where, as a man in a manner destitute of all consolation, he makes his complaint, saying, "How long wilt thou forget me?" The same may be read also in the forty-third psalm, where he shows that he, his most just cause, and the doctrine that he professed, were altogether likely to have been overcome, so that his spirit was in a manner all comfortless. Then he said to his own soul, "Why art thou so heavy, my soul; and why dost thou trouble me? Trust in the Lord," &c. (Psalm xlii. xliii.) And in the forty-second psalm he sets forth wonderfully the bitter fight and sorrowful conflict between hope and desperation; wherein he complains also of his own soul that was so much discomforted, and bids it trust in the Lord; of the which two places you may learn, that no man ever had faith at all times alike, but sometimes more strong, sometimes more weak, as it pleased God to give it. Let no man, therefore, despair, although he find weakness of faith; for it shall make him to humble himself the more, and be the more diligent to pray to have help,

when he perceives his own weakness; and, doubtless, at length the weak man by the strong God shall be brought to this point, that he shall in all troubles and adversities say with the prophet, "If I should go through the shadow and dangers of death, I would not fear, what troubles soever happen." And he shows his good assurance in the text that follows, which is the sixth part of this holy and blessed hymn.

VI.—Whereby the Troubles of God's Elect are overcome.

The fourth verse continued, and the fifth verse expounded.

For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Thou shalt prepare a table before me, against them that trouble me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.

Seeing thou art with me, at whose power and will all troubles go and come, I doubt not but to have the victory and upperhand of them, how many and dangerous soever they are; for thy rod chasteneth me when I go astray, and thy staff stayeth me when I should fall—two things most necessary for me, good Lord; the one to call me from my fault and error, and the other to keep me in thy truth and verity. What can be more blessed than to be sustained and kept from falling by the staff and strength of the Most High? And what can be more profitable, than to be beaten with his merciful rod, when we go astray? For he chasteneth as many as he loveth, and beateth as many as he receiveth into his holy profession. Notwithstanding, while we are here in this life, he feeds us with the sweet pastures of the wholesome herbs of his holy word, until we come to eternal life; and when we put off these bodies, and come into heaven, and know the blessed fruition and riches of his kingdom, then shall we not only be his sheep, but also the guests of his everlasting banquet; which, Lord, thou settest before all them that love thee in this world, and dost so anoint and make glad our minds with thine Holy Spirit, that no adversities nor troubles can make us sorry.

In this sixth part the prophet declares the old saying

amongst wise men, "It is no less mastery to keep the thing that is won, than it was to win it." King David perceives right well the same; and, therefore, as before in the psalm he said, the Lord turned his soul, and led him into the pleasant pastures, where virtue and justice reigned, for his name's sake, and not for any righteousness of his own: so saith he now, that being brought into the pastures of truth and into the favour of the Almighty, and accounted and taken for one of his sheep, it is only God that keeps and maintains him in the same state, condition, and grace. For he could not pass through the troubles and shadow of death, as he and all God's elect people must do, but only by the assistance of God; and, therefore, he saith, he passes through all peril because he was with him.

From this part of the psalm we learn, that all the strength of man is unable to resist the troubles and persecutions of God's people; and that the grace and presence of God is able to defend his people, and nothing but it. Therefore Saint Paul bade the Ephesians be strong through the Lord, and through the might of his strength; for he saith, that great and many are our adversaries, strong and mighty, who go about not only to weaken us, but also to overcome us; and we, of ourselves, have no power to withstand. (Eph. vi.) Wherefore he willeth us to depend and stay only upon God's strength. And St. Peter also, when he declared the force and malice of the devil, he willeth us to resist him strongly in faith. (1 Pet. v.) And St. John saith, that "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John v.) And our Saviour Christ, when the time was come that he should depart out of the world corporeally, and he perceived how maliciously and strongly the devil and the world were bent against his disciples, whom he should leave in the world as sheep amongst wolves, and how little strength his poor flock had against such marvellous troubles; he made his most holy and effectual prayer for them present, and them in trouble, and likewise for us that are now, and also are in trouble, in this sort: "Holy Father, keep them for thy name's sake, whom thou hast given me." (John xvii.)

Here every one of God's people has such learning* as teaches that our help is only in the name of the Lord,

* Instruction.

who made heaven and earth: (Psalm cxxi.) and in this learning we shall understand two necessary lessons: the first, that none can defend us but God alone, who is our protector, and none but he. And by this learning, he will beware to ask or seek help of any other, saving of God, as we are instructed by his holy word. And herein we honour him, to know and confess that there is none that can preserve or save us but he alone. The other lesson is, that our conscience, understanding that God can and will help us, shall cause us in all trouble to commend ourselves unto him, and so more strongly and patiently bear and suffer all troubles and adversities, being assured that we shall overcome them through him, or else be taken by them from this world, into a world wherein is no trouble at all. So said this holy prophet and king, David: "If I walk in the shadow of death, I will not fear, for thou art with me." Now in that he saith, "he will not fear," he means not that a man may see and suffer these perils without any peril, for then were a man rather a perfect spirit, than a mortal creature; but he means that fear shall not overcome him. For Christ himself feared death, (Matt. xxvi.) neither is there any man that shall suffer imprisonment for Christ's sake, but he shall feel the pains; nevertheless, God's Spirit shall give strength to bear them, and also in Christ to overcome them.

There is no man that can have faith, but sometimes, and upon some occasion, it may be troubled and assaulted with mistrust; no man can have such charity, but that it may be, yea, and is troubled with hatred; no man such patience, but that it may at times feel impatience; no man such verity, but that it may be troubled with falsehood; howbeit, in the people of God, by God's help, the best overcomes the worst, and the virtue the sin. But in case the worst prevail and overcome, the man of God is never quiet, until he be restored unto God again, and unto the same virtues that he lost by sin; as you may see in this king, by many of his psalms, that he believed, and found God to defend him, howsoever his state was; and therefore attributes unto him the whole victory and praise of his deliverance, saying, "Thou art with me, and dost overcome."

But now the prophet declares, how and by what means God is with him, and delivers him from all troubles. And this means of God's presence and defence he opens by

divers allegories and translations, wonderfully meet and apt to express the thing that he would show to the world.

The first translation, or allegory, he takes from the nature of a rod; the second, of a staff; and he saith, they comforted him, and defended him; the third he takes of a table, which he saith the great Shepherd prepared before his face, against as many as troubled him: the fourth he takes from the nature of oil, and of a cup that was always full, wherewith he was not only satisfied, but also joyfully replenished in all times and all troubles, whatsoever they were.

By the rod is many times in the scripture understood the punishment and correction that God uses to call home again, and to amend his elect and beloved people when they offend him: "He punisheth them, and yet killeth them not; he beateth them until they know their faults, but casteth them not away;" as he said to king David, (2 Sam. vii.) that when he died, his kingdom should come unto one of his own children; and in case he went astray from his law, he would correct him with the rod of other princes, and with the plagues of the sons of men: "But my mercy I will not take from him, as I did from Saul."

This same manner of speech you may read also in his eighty-ninth psalm; and in the Proverbs of his son king Solomon (chap. x.) you have the same doctrine: "He that wanteth a heart must have his back beaten with a rod." And in the same book he saith, "He that spareth the rod, hateth the child." So king David here confesses, that it is a very necessary and requisite way, to keep the sheep of God from perishing, to be chastened and corrected when they become wanton, and will not hear the voice of their Shepherd. And it is the part of every wise, godly man, to love this correction and chastisement of the Lord; as Solomon saith, (Prov. xii.) "He that loveth discipline and correction, loveth knowledge; he that hateth to be rebuked, is a fool." And king David saith, "It is to my great good commodity,* that the Lord chasteneth me." (Psalm cxix.) This rod of correction, David saith, is one of the instruments and means wherewith God preserves his sheep from straying. Now, in the scripture sometimes the rod is taken, not for correction that amends a man, but for the punishment and utter destruction of man, as David saith of Christ, "Thou shalt break them

* Advantage.

with an iron rod;" (Psalm ii.) and in the Apocalypse you may see the same. (chap. xii.) But I will speak of the metaphors and translations no otherwise than David uses them in this place, for his purpose.

The staff which he speaks of, in scripture is taken for strength, power, and dominion; which staff is spoken of, as you may see, in the books of the Kings; how the ambassadors and men of war sent from the king of the Assyrians to Hezekiah at Jerusalem, called the strength and power of the Egyptians, and also of the almighty God, a staff of reed, and a broken weapon, not able to withstand the king of the Assyrians. (2 Kings xviii.) And of such manner of speech you may read many times in the prophets. (Isa. x. xiv. xxviii. xxxix. Ezek. xxix.) But in this place David confesses that the staff of the Lord, that is to say, God's power, is so strong that nothing is able to overcome it: his wisdom is such, that no man can make it foolishness; his truth is so true, that no man can make it false; his promise is so certain and sure, that no man can cause him to break or alter it; his love is so constant, that no man can withdraw it; his providence is so wise, that no man can beguile him; his care is so great for his flock, that they can want nothing; his fold is so strong, that no beast can break it; he letteth his sheep in and out so that no man can deceive him; he has such a care of all, that he neglects not one; he so loves the one, that he hates not the other; he so teaches all, that none is left ignorant; he so calls one, that all should be advertised; he so chastens one, that all should beware; he so receives one, that all should take hope and consolation; he so preserves one, that all the rest may be assured that he uses his staff and power to comfort one, even king David, as he saith, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me," that others should assure themselves to be safe under his protection.

In this metaphor and translation, under the name of a staff, king David hath declared the power of God to be such, that in case he should pass by and through thousands of perils, he would not care, for God is with him, with his rod and staff.

Then he sets forth the third allegory, and expresses another means, which God uses for the defence and consolation of his poor sheep, and saith, that God hath prepared a table in his sight against all those that trouble

him. By the name of a table, he sets forth the familiar, and, as it were, fellow-like love, which the omnipotent God hath towards his sheep, with whom he not only uses friendship, but also familiarity; and disdains not, being the King of kings, to admit and receive unto his table, vile and beggarly sinners, scabbed and rotten sheep. That friendship and familiarity is marvellously set forth in this, that he made a table for David: as though David had said, "Who is he that can hurt me, when the Lord of lords not only loves me, but admits me to be always familiarly in his company?" The same manner of speech is used by king David towards Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, when he said he should not only have the fields of Saul, his grandfather, but also be entertained at his own table; that is to say, used friendly, honourably, and familiarly. (2 Sam. ix.) This word, table, is many times taken otherwise in the scripture; but in this place it is nearest to the mind of king David, to take it in this signification that I nave noted. And our Saviour Christ takes it in the same signification, in St. Luke's gospel, where he saith, his disciples shall eat with him at his table in the kingdom of God.

The fourth means that the heavenly Shepherd uses in keeping of his sheep, the prophet setteth forth under the name of oil, and a full cup. In the word of God these words also have comfortable signification and meanings, extending to David's purpose. Isaac, when he had given the blessing from Esau to Jacob, said to Jacob, "God shall give thee of the dew from heaven, and from the fruitful ground thou shalt have abundance of corn, of wine, and oil," &c. (Gen. xxvii.) By which blessing he means that Jacob should lack nothing to serve his needs, and to make him happy. And if we understand David to mean, by oil, as Isaac did, that at the Lord's table was all plenty, mirth, and solace, we take him not amiss; for many times oil is so taken for consolation and joy in the scriptures. When Christ had purged the hurt man's wounds, first with smarting wine, he afterwards put into them sweet oil, to ease the smart and sharpness of the wine. (Luke x.) And so likewise saith our Saviour Christ to Simon the pharisee, who gave him meat enough for his dinner, but gave him no mirth: "Since I came into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet, nor oil for my head: this poor woman never ceased to wash my feet with the tears of her

eyes, and to anoint them with oil." (Luke vii.) But in many psalms king David uses this word 'oil,' to signify the Holy Ghost, as when he speaketh of our Saviour Christ: "Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity; therefore hath God anointed thee with the oil of joy, above thy fellows." (Psalm xlv.) And this oil is not the material oil that kings and priests were anointed with in the old time of the law, of whose confection we read in the book of Leviticus: but this is the oil by whose efficacy, strength, and power, all things were made, that is to say, the Holy Ghost. And in his eighty-ninth psalm he speaks of the oil in the same signification. Therefore I take king David here, when he saith, God has anointed his head with oil, to mean that God has illuminated his spirit with the Holy Ghost. And so is this place understood by godly men, his head taken for his mind, and oil for the Holy Ghost. And as oil nourishes light, mitigates labours and pains, and exhilarates the countenance, so the Holy Ghost nourishes the light and knowledge of the mind, replenishes it with God's gifts, and rejoices the heart: therefore, the Holy Ghost is called the oil of mirth and consolation. And this consolation comes unto king David, and to all God's lively members, by the means of Christ, as St. Peter saith, "We are people chosen, and a princely priesthood," &c. (2 Pet. ii.)

By the word 'cup,' in this verse, he means that he is fully instructed in all godly knowledge, to live virtuously and godly for the time of this mortal life; and so is the cup in the scripture taken for any thing that can happen unto us, whether it be adversity or prosperity, for they are called cups: as Christ said of his death, "Father, if it be possible, take this cup from me." (Matt. xxvi.) And David, in the sixteenth psalm, uses it for man's prosperity in God. "The Lord (saith he) is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup." And therein he speaks in the name of Christ, whose inheritance is the whole number of the faithful, and saith, that his inheritance, which is the church, by God's appointment is blessed and happy; for no adversity can destroy it. This is meant by David's words, the rod, the staff, the table, the oil, and the cup: and he uses all these words to declare the carefulness, love, and defence of God towards miserable man. And he could the better speak thereof unto others, because he had so many times felt and experienced that God was

both strong and faithful towards him in all time of danger and adversity.

And here is to be noted, that the dangers that man is subject unto in this life, are not alone such as heretofore king David made mention of, as sickness, treason, sedition, war, poverty, banishment, and the death of the body: but he felt also, as every man of God shall feel and perceive, that there are greater perils and dangers which man stands in jeopardy of, than these are, by occasion of sin, the mother of all man's adversity. Sin brings a man into the displeasure and indignation of God; the indignation of God brings a man into the hatred of God; the hatred of God brings a man into despair and doubtfulness of God's forgiveness; despair brings a man into everlasting pain; and everlasting pain continues and punishes the damned creature with fire never to be quenched, with God's anger and displeasure, which cannot be reconciled nor pacified.

These are the troubles of all troubles, and sorrows of all sorrows, as our Saviour Christ declares in his most heavenly prayer to his heavenly Father, in St. John. "I do not pray, that thou shouldest take those that I pray for out of the world, but that thou preserve them from the evil." (John xvii.) And in this prayer he has wonderfully taught us, that a christian man is subject to two kinds of troubles; one of the body, and another of the soul; one of the world, and another of the devil. As for the troubles of the world, he saith, it is not so expedient that christian men be delivered from them, lest in idleness we should seek ourselves, and not God, as the children of Israel did. But this he knew was most necessary, that the Father should preserve us in the midst of these troubles, with his help, from all sin and transgression of his holy laws: and this he assured his disciples of, and all others that put their trust in him, not that they should in this life be preserved and kept from troubles and adversities; but that the heavenly Father should always give unto his people such strength and virtue against all the enemies of God, and man's salvation, that they should not be overcome with troubles, who put their trust in him.

For God suffers and appoints his people to fight and make war with sin, and with all troubles and sorrows that sin brings with it: but God will never permit his to be deadly and mortally wounded. It is, therefore, expedient

that man should know who are his greatest foes, and work him most danger.

There are divers psalms, wherein he sets forth the peril that he was in, as well in his body as in his soul; as when he complains of his banishment, not only amongst cruel people, but also the ungodly, who sought to take both his mortal life from him, and also his religion and trust that he had in God's word. Wherefore he compares them to the Tartarians and Arabians, men without pity or religion. (Psal cxx.) And the like he afterwards does in another psalm, where, giving thanks for his delivery, he saith that sinners trod upon his back, and many times warred against him, and he should have been overthrown if God had not helped him. (Psalm cxxix.) Wherein he speaks not only of battle with the sword against the body, but also of heresy and false doctrine against the soul. As you may see how Sennacherib and Julian the apostate, two emperors, fought against the people of God, not only to take from them their lives, but also their religion and true honouring of God. And of all battles that is the cruelest, and of all enemies the principal, that would take the soul of man from God's word, and bring it to the word of man. And persecution and trouble openly against God's word continued many years, until Christ was preached abroad, and princes made christians. Then the devil thought his kingdom would have been overthrown, and christian men might live in Christ's religion, without any trouble or war for religion: howbeit, at length, for sin the devil entered by subtle means, not only to corrupt true religion, but also persecuted the true professors thereof under the name of true religion; and therein used a marvellous policy and craft, by men that walked inordinately amongst the christians themselves. From whose companies, sects, and conversation, St. Paul wills us to refrain by these words: "We command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye refrain from every one that is accounted a brother, that uses himself inordinately, and not according to the institution he received of us." (2 Thes. iii.) And because you have not taken heed of this holy commandment, and kept yourselves from danger and peril of heresy, sin, idolatry, and superstition, by the rod and staff of God, nor have eaten your meat of religion at God's table, nor have your minds been anointed with the Holy Ghost, as David in this psalm saith that he

was defended and maintained against all troubles by these means, so that no peril of the body by the sword, nor peril of the soul by false doctrine, could hurt him—therefore mark a little, and see the dangers that have hurt both you and your consciences also; and which are not likely to be healed, as far as I can see, but to be still more hurt hereafter. For the way to heal a man is to expel and put away sickness, and not to increase and continue sickness.

From whom think you that St. Paul commands you to refrain in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ? He saith, "From him that behaveth himself inordinately." Who is that, think you? St. Paul saith, He that rules not himself after the rule and institution that he himself had taught the Thessalonians. So that we must then refrain from all such as conform not themselves to the institution of St. Paul: yea, although he be an angel from heaven. (Gal. i.) This departure from such as have ruled and put forth errors and lies, is not new, but has been used in England by Englishmen: more than twenty years since we departed from the see of Rome, by reason of the ambition of the Roman bishops who transgressed both this ordinance of St. Paul and also of Christ. Of the which deadly and pestilent ambition the prophet Ezekiel prophesied, (chap. xxxiv.) and so did also St. Paul; (Acts xx.) if prophecies by God, and commandments by his holy apostles, had prevailed in our dull and naughty hearts. Read the places, and see yourselves what is spoken of such wicked shepherds. I put you in mind of this wicked see, because I perceive that, contrary to the word of God, contrary to the most godly laws of the realm against the pope's supremacy; against all our oaths who are Englishmen, and against all the old godly writers, this antichrist and member of the devil is not unlikely to have the rule over your souls again, which God forbid. I exhort all men, therefore, to beware of him, as of one that came naughtily to such usurped authority; and whose authority is not only the trouble of all christian realms and princes, but also of all christian souls. And as he always has been a trouble unto the one, so has he been a destruction to the other: as I will a little declare unto you, that you may know him the better, and so by the rod and staff of God's word defend yourselves from him.

The Greek church, for this ambition of the Romish bishop, separated herself from the church of Rome, and

would not have to do with her; for after the Greeks knew that the bishops of Rome meant to take from them their liberties, they would not endure it: yet the Romish bishops always, to come to the supremacy, picked quarrels and matters to fall out upon, first with the clergy and then with the laity. Platina writes how Pius, bishop of Rome, being deceived by one Hermes, a very evil man, began a new order about the keeping of Easter-day, and altered the time that the apostles and their disciples used, until Pius's days, which was to celebrate and keep the day of the resurrection of our Saviour Christ the fourteenth day of the first month, which is with the Jews our March.* And although it be well done to keep it upon the Sunday, yet it was a horrible presumption upon so light a cause to excommunicate the Greek church, and to make division where before was union. It came to pass in Victor the first's time, which was about the year of our Lord 200, and in the time of Irenæus, the bishop of Lyons, the disciple of John the Evangelist, this Victor would have condemned the Greek church, and proceeded with excommunication against it, had not Irenæus hindered it: yet was it the elder church, and had continued in the doctrine of the apostles from Christ's time, and had John the Evangelist amongst them for the space of threescore and eight years after Christ's ascension. And notwithstanding the Greek church was the elder church, yet the Roman church was made equal with them, according to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and also according to the decree that was made in the general council at Nice.† And the Greek church never contended with the Romish church for the supremacy, until a proud and arrogant monk, that feigned humility, was preferred to be bishop of Constantinople; who came to such arrogance of spirit, that he would have been taken for the universal head of the church; which was a very mark to know that he was of antichrist, and not of Christ, as Gregory the great wrote to Constantia the empress: and at length this proud monk, at a synod kept at Constantinople, created himself the universal head of the church.‡ Although, before his time, one Menna and other

* About A. D. 155. The eastern christians kept the feast on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month without regard to the day of the week on which it fell. Mosheim gives a particular account of this dispute.

† A. D. 325.

‡ John, bishop of Constantinople, assembled a council A. D. 588, and assumed the title of universal bishop.

archbishops of Constantinople, for the dignity of the imperial state being there, were called universal patriarchs; yet that was by name alone, and without execution of authority in any foreign bishopric or church. But such was the ambition of these bishops, that walked, as St. Paul saith, inordinately, that they would have the head and principality of religion and of the church at Constantinople, because there was the head and principality of the worldly kingdom. And so they began betimes to confound the civil policy with the policy of the church, until they brought themselves not only to be heads of the church, but also lords of all emperors and kings, and at the last of God and God's word: as ruthfully* appears in men's consciences at the present day. Which abomination and pride, Pelagius II., the bishop of Rome, both spake and wrote against, and would that neither he nor any man else should have the name of a general bishop. And Gregory I. confirms the same godly sentence of his predecessor Pelagius, and would not, when he was commanded by the emperor, whom John the bishop had deceived, take the archbishop of Constantinople for the universal head, nor condescend unto the emperor's commandment, but wrote to the empress that it was contrary to the ordinance of Christ and his apostles, and contrary to the council of Nice. He said also, that such new arrogance was a true token that the time of antichrist drew nigh. And Gregory not only wrote and spoke against this arrogance and pride, but suffered also great danger, as Platina writes, and so did all Rome, by the Lombards, whom Mauritius the emperor made to besiege Rome, because Gregory refused to obey the archbishop of Constantinople as the head of the church.

But although Pelagius, Gregory, and other godly men, detested and abhorred this wicked arrogance to be the universal head of the church, yet the bishop of Ravenna began among the Latins to prepare the way to antichrist, as Paulus Diaconus saith, and separated himself from the society of other churches, to the intent he might come to be a head himself. But what at length came of it Platina writes. And within a short time after, Boniface the third, being the bishop of Rome, about the year of our Lord 607, Phocas, the emperor, judged him to be head of the church, against both the bishop of Constantinople, and also of

* Grievously, ruinously.

Ravenna: and such a sentence was meet for such an arbiter. Phocas was a wicked man, a covetous man, an adulterer, and a traitorous murderer of his lord and master Mauritius; and this man, to make God and the Romans amends, gave sentence that the bishop of Rome should be the universal head of the church! But here were contemned the sentence and doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and also the decrees of the holy council of Nice. And no marvel: for they condemned both parties of arrogance and usurpation; and not only these councils, but all others, for many years, which decreed, that although one seat was named before the other, yet the bishop of the principal seat should not be the chief priest or head of the rest, but only he should be called the bishop of the chief seat; and how much it is against St. Cyprian, they may see that will read his works, and also against St. Jerome. But what law can rule wickedness? This wicked see contended still, after Phocas had given sentence with it, for the supremacy; yet the bishops of Rome were always subject to the emperors, as well of Constantinople as of France, for the time of their reign; yea, four hundred years and odd, after the judgment of Phocas, they were in this obedience, and were made by the emperors until the time of Gregory the seventh, who, in the time of great sedition, translated the empire into Germany; and they never used jurisdiction over emperors, or kings, nor yet over the citizens of Rome; but only desired to have all bishops' causes to be judged by the see of Rome, yet could not obtain so much in those days, as appears by the council of Africa, where Boniface the first could not obtain with craft, nor with his lies, what he made of the canons decreed in the council of Nice, to have causes deferred to the see of Rome.

And as for this name, 'Pope,' it was a general name to all bishops, as appears in the epistles of Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine, and other old bishops and doctors, who were more holy and better learned than these later ambitious and glorious enemies of Christ and Christ's church. Read the text, (Distinct. 50, Hist. lib. ii. cap. xxvii.) and there shall you see that the clergy of Rome, in their letters, called Cyprian pope; and Clodovius, the king of France, named the bishop of Rome, as he did other bishops, only as a bishop.

This was the state of the primitive church, which was

both near unto Christ in time, and like unto him in doctrine, and kept St. Paul's equality, where, as he saith, (Gal. ii.) he was appointed among the Gentiles, as Peter was among the Jews. And although the bishops, in the time of Constantine the great, obtained, that, among bishops, there should be some that should be called archbishops and metropolitans; yet they were not instituted to be heads generally of the church, but that they should take more pains to see the church well ordered and instructed: and yet this pre-eminence was at the liberty and discretion of princes, and not always bound unto one place, and one sort of prelates, as the wickedness of our time believes: as you may see in the councils of Chalcedon and Africa. So that it is manifest, this superior pre-eminence is not of God's laws, but of man's, instituted for a civil policy: and so was the church of Constantinople equal with the church of Rome. And, in our days, Erasmus Roterodamus writes and says, This name, to be high bishop of the world, was not known to the old church: but that bishops were all called high priests; and that name Urban the first gave unto all bishops. But as for one to be head of all, it was not admitted. And the Greek church never agreed to this wicked supremacy, nor obeyed it until the year of our Lord 1202, when compelled thereunto by one Baldwin, that brought the Frenchmen, by the help of the Venetians, unto Constantinople, to restore one Alexius unto the empire, upon this condition, that he should subdue the Greek church to the church of Rome. But this came to pass, that the pope, never after he had gotten by alms and help of princes to be over them, cared one jot for the emperor of Constantinople further than he served his turn. So that you may see both his beginning and proceedings to be of the devil; which, if you kill not with the staff of God's word, and beat him from your conscience, he will double-kill your souls.

Now, within one hundred and fifty years after Phocas had made the bishop of Rome head of the church, the bishop of Rome contemned the emperor of Constantinople, and devised to bring the empire into France, and to give the king of France the same authority over the bishop of Rome which formerly the emperor had, as it appears in Charles the great, and his successors, a long time: and yet was the bishop of Rome under the princes, and not, as he is now, an idol exempt from all order and obedience.

For princes made the bishops of Rome, and all other bishops, within their realms, and so continued the making of the pope in the emperor's authority, until it was about the year of our Lord 1110. After that, the emperor, Henry the fifth, being sore molested with sedition, moved against him by pope Paschal the second, was constrained, at length, to surrender his authority unto him, who turned the face of his bishopric into manifest wars. What followed when the pope was thus free, and lived without obedience to the christian magistrates, I will not, in this treatise, make mention; but put you in remembrance, that, for certainty, there followed such trouble among christian princes, as never was before; as it is to be seen by the doing of the wicked man, pope Gregory the seventh, who took then upon him to have authority to use two swords, the spiritual and the temporal; insomuch that the emperor, Henry the fourth, was compelled, threescore and two times, to make war in his life, by the means of the bishop of Rome. And as it is written, (Alberus Crantzius, Ecclesiast. Hist. lib. vi.) this wicked bishop stirred up the emperor's own brother-in-law, Radulphus, the duke of Suevia, to war against him, and sent him a crown of gold with this verse graven on it: "Christ gave the empire to Peter, Peter gives it to Radulph." Meaning that Christ had given the worldly empire to the bishop of Rome, and he gave it to Radulph. You may see what a rod the emperors made for themselves. For, after they had made the bishop of Rome head of the church, the bishops made themselves shortly after the heads of emperors and kings: —a just plague of God for all those that will exalt such to rule, as God said should be ruled.

These bishops were not only proud, but also unthankful. For whereas all the world knows the bishop's authority to come from the emperor in worldly things, and not from God, but against God; this monster, pope Gregory the seventh, said, that Christ gave him the empire of Rome, and he gave license to the duke of Suevia, Radulph, to kill his good brother, the emperor, Henry the fourth. He that will know more of this wicked man, and of his brethren bishops of Rome, let him read Benno the cardinal, who writes in his History of the Popes, what he saw of the popes, and John the twentieth, Benedict the ninth, Silvester the third, Gregory the sixth, Leo the ninth, Alexander the second. But in his old days he saw and

wrote horrible and execrable things of pope Gregory the seventh. Yet was England free from this beast of Rome then, compared with what it was before the idol was expelled in our king Henry the eighth's time. But Alexander the third never rested to move men to sedition until such time as king Henry the seventh was content to be under him as others were. And all this England suffered for Thomas à Becket, the pope's martyr!

When they were crept up into this high authority, all their own creatures, the bishops of their sect, the cardinals, priests, monks, and friars, would never be contented to be under the obedience of the princes: and, to say the truth, princes durst not require it, for they were in danger of goods and life. And the emperor, Henry the seventh, was poisoned by a monk, who poisoned the idol of the mass, a god and minister meet to poison men, and both of the pope's making!* And what conscience did they make of this, think you? Doubtless none at all; for the pope saith, and so do all his children, that they can dispense and absolve themselves, and all men, from what oaths soever they have made to God or man. This enemy, with his false doctrine, is to be resisted and overcome by the word of God, or else he will destroy both body and soul. Therefore, against all his crafts and abominations, we must have the rod, the staff, the table, the oil, and the cup, that David speaks of, in readiness to defend ourselves withal.

Now follows the last part of this holy hymn.

VII.—What the End of God's troubled People shall be.

Ver. 6.—*Thy loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

I will, in the midst of all troubles, be strong and of good cheer; for I am assured, that thy mercy and goodness will never forsake me, but will continually preserve me in all dangers of this life: and when I shall depart from this bodily life, thy mercy will bring me into that house of thine eternal joys, where I shall live with thee in everlasting felicity.

* Poison was put into the wafer administered to the emperor. See numerous authorities cited in Foulis' history of Romish treasons, chap. iv.

Of this part we learn, that the dangers of this life are no more than God can and will put from us, or preserve us in them, when they come unto us without danger; also, that the troubles of this world are not perpetual nor damnable for ever, but that they are only sent from God, for a time, to exercise and prove our faith and patience. At the last we learn, that, the troubles being ended, we begin and shall continue for ever in endless pleasure and consolation, as David shows at the end of his psalm. So Christ makes an end with his disciples, when he has committed them, for the time of this life, to the tuition of the heavenly Father, whilst he is bodily absent; he saith, at length, they shall be where he is himself, in heaven for ever. For in this life, although the faithful of God have consolation in God's promises, yet their joy is very dark and obscure, by reason of troubles both without and within: outwardly, by persecution; inwardly, by temptation. Therefore, Christ desires his Father to lead and conduct his church in truth and verity, whilst it is here in fight and persecution with the devil, until it come to a perfect and absolute consolation, where no trouble may molest it. For then, and not before, to what perfection soever we come, shall we be satisfied, as David saith: "The plentifulness of pleasure and joy is in the sight and contemplation of thee, O Lord!" (Psalm xvi.) For then shall the mind of man be fully satisfied, when he, being present, may speedily behold the glorious majesty of God; for God hath then all joys present to him that is present with Him, and then man knoweth God, as he is known of God. (1 Cor. xiii.) These joys, in the end of troubles, should give the troubled man the more courage to bear troubles patiently, and be persuaded, as St. Paul teaches, that the troubles of this present life are not worthy of the joys to come, which shall be revealed to us when Christ cometh to judge the quick and the dead. (Rom. viii.) To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and praise, world without end. Amen.

AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

SIXTY-SECOND PSALM.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet, in this psalm, declares, by his own experience, how the truth of God's word, and such as favour and follow the same, are esteemed and used in the world by worldly men,—the truth itself rejected, and the lovers thereof slandered and persecuted. And seeing truth and true men, before the prophet's time, in his time, and after his time, were thus miserably afflicted; in this psalm he writes his own condition and miseries, with certain and most comfortable remedies, by which ways the afflicted person may best comfort himself, and pass over the bitterness and dangers of his troubles, and suffer them patiently, as long as God lays them upon him. So that whosoever, from the feeling of his heart can say this psalm, and use the remedies prescribed therein by the Spirit of God; doubtless he shall be able to bear the troubles both of the devil and man patiently, and contemn them strongly.

The parts of the Psalm are two in number.

I. In the first is contained, how that the favour of God, and his help, are able to remedy all adversities.

II. In the second is contained, that the favour of man, and his help, are able to redress no adversities.

The first part comprehends eight verses of the psalm. The second part contains the other four verses that next follow to the end of the psalm.

These two general parts contain more particular parts in them, in number six.

I. First, what is to be done by the christian man that is afflicted.

II. The second part shows why the troubled man, in trouble, looks for help of God.

III. The third part declares how suddenly God can destroy the persecutors of the truth.

IV. The fourth part contains the repetition of the first and the second part, with more causes shown why trouble is to be borne patiently; and why it is faithfully to be believed that God can and will remedy it.

V. The fifth part declares, that man's power is not to be feared, nor his friendship to be trusted unto; for no man is able to damn or save.

VI. The sixth part sets forth, that God has promised to help the afflicted, and will assuredly perform it.

The Psalm with the parts before-named, where they begin, and where they end.

1. "My soul truly waiteth still upon God."

The first part teaches a man to flee unto God in the time of oppression and trouble.

1, 2. "For of him cometh my salvation: he verily is my strength and my salvation; he is my defence, so shall I not greatly fall."

The second part of the Psalm, that declares why the troubled man trusts in God.

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3. "How long will ye imagine mischief against every man? Ye shall be slain all the sort of you: yea, as a tottering wall shall ye be, and like a broken hedge.

4. "Their device is only how to put him out, whom God will exalt: their delight is in lies: they give good words with their mouth, but curse with their heart. Selah."

The third part of the Psalm, wherein is shown, that suddenly the persecutors of the innocent shall perish.

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5. "Nevertheless, my soul, wait thou still upon God, for my hope is in him.

6. "He truly is my strength and my salvation; he is my defence, so that I shall not fall.

7. " In God is my health and my glory, the rock of my might; and in God is my trust.

8. " O put your trust in him always, ye people; pour out your hearts before him, for God is our hope. Selah."

In these four verses is contained the fourth part; wherein is mentioned the repetition of the two first verses.

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9. " As for the children of men, they are but vain; the children of men are deceitful upon the weights; they are altogether lighter than vanity itself.

10. " O trust not in wrong and robbery; give not yourselves to vanity: if riches increase, set not your hearts upon them."

Here is the fifth part, that teaches no trust to be put in man; for he is not able to damn or save.

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11. " God spake once, and twice I have also heard the same, that power belongs unto God:

12. " And that thou, Lord, art merciful, for thou rewardest every man according to his work."

In these two verses is comprehended the sixth part, which is, that God has promised to be merciful in helping the afflicted, and that he will perform his promises.

A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM GENERALLY.

" *My soul, doubtless, waiteth still upon God,*" &c. Be my troubles ever so great and dangerous, yet my soul shall trust continually and constantly in the Lord, who can and will remedy them; for he is my strength and my salvation, and he is my defence.

" *So shall I not greatly fall.*" Although, good Lord, by reason of my infirmity and sin, which is in all men, my soul is weak and feeble, so that it will be oppressed with the lightest of all thy troubles, which thou layest upon man for his sin; yet, when it takes hold of thy mercy, it waxes strong. And although it is weak and trembling by reason of infirmity, yet it does not wholly fall from the trust of constancy and hope.

And let the wicked imagine their wicked imaginations against thy poor servants, O God; yet at length they shall come to shame and destruction, as the tottering wall does fall, and the rotten hedge is consumed with fire. For

what they go about, they shall never bring to pass, because they devise to put him to shame whom God has purposed to exalt and magnify. And whatsoever doubleness they use to speak fair with their mouths, and yet have false and hollow hearts, it shall not bring their intent to their purposed end, Selah. God be thanked, on whom depends all the hope of my salvation; and he is my strength, my salvation, and my defence, so that I shall not fall.

Wherefore, all christians and afflicted persons, saith the prophet, follow mine example, and put all your hope and trust in the mercy of God, who only saves us from evil, and blesses us with all goodness. Pour out, therefore, all your cares and heaviness before him, and look assuredly for help from him, for, doubtless, the help of man is nothing worth; for "if man and vanity were both weighed in a pair of balances, vanity itself would be weightier than man! How, then, can so light a thing as man is, help in the time of trouble?" And as a man is but vanity, or else more vain than vanity; so are all worldly riches that man possesses, and as little or less able to help an afflicted man, as man is unable to help himself.

And this I know, saith the prophet, not by man's wisdom, but by the mouth of God, that whatsoever help man looks for, besides God, he may be assured at all times to be both helpless and comfortless; and trusting to God, he shall be at all times both helped and comforted; for so saith the Lord, whose sayings no power is able to falsify or to resist.

What things are to be noted out of every particular part of this Psalm, for the edifying and comfort of him that shall say, sing, or meditate upon, this Psalm.

THE FIRST PART.

Verse 1. *My soul truly waiteth still upon God.*

From the first part, wherein is contained what the christian should do in the time of trouble, is to be noted what it is for a man to have his soul waiting still upon God; or else to have silence always in his soul towards God in the days of adversity, as this psalm speaks. When the christian man or woman, in the time of sorrow and

heaviness, without grudge or impatience looks for the help of God, and gives not himself to quarrelling or complaining of God, as though he did him wrong, and punished him too much, then the soul waits upon the Lord; or else hath silence towards God, as we see by Job, where his soul still attended upon the Lord. When his goods, cattle, house, and children were taken from him, he said, "The Lord gave them, the Lord hath taken them away; as the Lord is pleased, so is it done. The name of the Lord be blessed." (Job i.) All this while he bore the cross of God without murmur or grudge, and had his soul still waiting upon God, as the psalmist here saith. But when he was burdened further, and from the sole of the foot to the top of the head was stricken with sores and blotches, he cursed the day that he was born in, and the night wherein he was conceived, with many more unquiet and lamentable words, as appears in his book.

The like example we have of king David in the book of the Psalms, where are these words: "In trouble and adversity I said, I was cast away from the sight of thine eyes, O God." &c. (Psalm xxxi.) And as Job said, if he should die, yet would he trust in the Lord (Job xiii. xvii.); so said David, if he should go in the midst of the shadow of death, he would not fear. (Psalm xxiii.) In which psalm you may see how constantly his soul waiteth upon the Lord: yet in the thirty-first psalm his troubles were so great, that in them he said, "I am cast from the sight of thee, O God." So that these testimonies and examples of the scriptures declare, that to have the soul to wait upon the Lord, is to be assured that God will help in trouble, and patiently to bear the trouble without grudge, until God send remedy and help for it.

The second thing to be gathered of this first part is, to mark and see, that in the very elect of God, and most excellent personages amongst holy men, there is sometimes quiet, patient, and thankful sufferance of adversity; that there seems in the soul of him that is troubled to be such constant and strong faith, that it makes all sorrows and troubles rather pleasant and sweet, than heavy, burdensome, or painful. At another time troubles seem unto them so heinous and grievous, that the burden of them is as great a pain as death, not only in unquieting the body, but also in very sore vexing of the spirit, with these and the like cogitations: "God hath cast me out of his sight;

God will have mercy upon me no more; my soul is heavy and troubled. (Psalm xxxi. xlii. xliii. lxxvii.) And this diversity of increase and decrease of faith and hope of holy men and women before our time, teaches us great wisdom and consolation; wisdom, in that we see faith and hope are not natural qualities in man, although he is ever so virtuous, or ever so graciously elected by God to eternal salvation; but they are the merciful gifts of God given unto man for Christ's sake, and wrought by the Holy Ghost above man's deservings.

We learn, also, that the gifts of God, faith, hope, and charity, patience and sufferance, with such like virtues, are not at all times of like condition and strength in man, but at some time so strong, that nothing can frighten us, and at another time so weak, that all things make us dismayed and fearful. Now and then it is so doubtful, that we cannot tell whether it were best to suffer for the truth, or else to be released by consenting unto falsehood. Thus God uses his gifts in us, not always after one sort, but partly for our sins, and partly to prove us, and to bring us to a certain knowledge of our infirmity and weakness. From Saul, Judas, and Cain, he took his Spirit wholly, to punish their iniquity and wickedness; and from Job to try his patience, and to make him feel that of himself he could bear nothing.

We learn consolation out of this text, that in our troubles the Lord forsakes us not, but comforts us; and the more our troubles and adversities are, the more is his grace and favour towards us. As the prophet saith in another of his psalms: "As adversities oppressed my heart, so thy consolations, Lord, rejoiced me:" (Psalm xciv.) in the which psalm you may see what consolation the afflicted conscience takes in adversities.

The psalm is made against the wicked oppressors and persecutors of the poor: wherein they say, "As the tyranny of the wicked troubles us, so thy consolations, good Lord, rejoice and comfort us." And the same saith St. Paul to the Corinthians: "As the afflictions of Christ abound in us, even so by Christ our consolation abounds." (2 Cor. i.)

There is also to be noted, that the prophet saith, "his soul waiteth upon the Lord."

Many men can dissemble injuries, wrongs, and oppressions outwardly: (Matt. x. xxvi. John xi. xviii. Luke xix.)

sometimes, when they are not able to revenge; and sometimes, when they dare not revenge, for lack of opportunity and occasion, lest more harm might ensue. As the Jews durst not kill Christ a great while, for fear of the people; yet were they murderers in their hearts before God, the fact outwardly not then being done. Some again revenge not, because they think dissembled patience will gain worldly advantages and riches. Howbeit, this quietness and refraining from revenge is nothing worth before God. But when the heart and soul wait upon God, and are contented to be as God makes them, that waiting and service of the soul the Lord delights in, and is pleased with.

This is a godly doctrine, and much to be desired, to have the mind contented with such things as are troublesome and painful to the body: and where the mind waits not patiently upon the Lord in trouble, it will appear divers ways. Sometimes, many years after the displeasure is done, the man that suffered the displeasure revenges it wrongfully and cruelly; as the pharisees and the high priests deferred the bloody deed of the killing of Christ until they had got time and opportunity for their purpose. Sometimes the impatience and unquietness of the mind appears by checks and taunting answers unto God; as when God asked Cain, where his brother Abel was; he asked God again, whether he were his brother's keeper or not? (Gen. iv.) In the same way Pharaoh's unquietness appeared. When God would have had him dismiss his people, he asked what God he was, unto whom he should do such homage and service. (Exod. v.) Sometimes it appears by desperate weighing the greatness of trouble, not considering the mercy of God, that is greater than sin. As Cain's unquiet soul for the killing of Abel brought his tongue to blaspheme the mercy of God, saying, that his iniquity was greater than the mercy of God could forgive; (Gen. iv.) so did the wicked soul of Judas, who betrayed Christ, make his tongue confess before the pharisees his treason and wickedness, and never call upon Christ for the remission thereof. (Matt. xxvii.) Sometimes the impatience of the mind is known outwardly, by finding fault with God's works: as when Adam's mind was disquieted for the eating of the apple, he said unto God, that his wife, the woman that he gave unto him, deceived him. (Gen. iii.) Ahab the wicked king being

impatient with the scourges that God sent upon his realm for his own sins and the people's, picked a quarrel with the good prophet Elias, and said, that he troubled all his realm. (1 Kings xviii.) So said the Jews against Paul: "This is he that troubleth all the world." (Acts xxi. xxiii.)

This is daily seen whenever the mind and the soul are disquieted, the fault is laid upon God's work; as if the higher powers hang a true man, and save a thief; deliver Barabbas, and hang Christ; straightway the tongue says, that he is set in authority by God. Indeed, so he is, but yet to punish the evil, and to maintain the good, and not to molest the good, and maintain the evil, as commonly now-a-days is seen. Simon Magus shall be at liberty, and Simon Peter in chains; Annas and Caiaphas shall rule like lords; Christ and St. Paul shall be ruled, and suffer death; although not personally in their own bodies, yet in their members and disciples.

Let the mind of the thief be touched for theft; straightway poverty, the work of God, bears the blame. Let whoredom vex the whoremonger's mind; immediately the tongue complains upon God's work, youth, strength, and such other. Let the mind be troubled with covetousness; by and by God's work, wife and children, are alleged for excuse, for they must be provided for, saith the covetous man, when he hath enough for himself and ten times as many more children as God has sent him, if it were thankfully used towards God, and liberally towards the world. So that if any man be touched with anguish or heaviness for sin, immediately the tongue saith, he was born under an evil planet, or in an evil hour, and so finds fault with the work of God, which God made excellently good. (Gen. i.)

Thus may you see, where the soul of man waits not upon God, the impatient man accuses God and all his works, both in heaven and in earth. But the godly, feeling the rod of God for sin and iniquity, (Prov. xviii.) as God never punishes without just cause, he first accuses himself, and acknowledges his own offences; and then saith with the prophet Micah, "I will suffer the indignation of God, for I have deserved it." (Mic. vii.)

To this waiting upon the Lord without quarrelling and desperate lamenting, Jeremiah the prophet exhorted the children of Israel, for the time of their being in servitude

and captivity at Babylon; bidding them to plant and graft trees, and so to provide for themselves, until the time of their affliction and captivity were expired.

Men may lament their sins and the troubles that they suffer for sin; as we may see how the psalm contains the bewailing and weeping of the people, that sat heavily and lamentably by the river side in Babylon. (Psalm cxxxvii.) And the like you may read in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. But this mourning was without desperation and quarrelling, as the letters and books record. Besides these things, the cause of their bewailing and lamenting while their souls waited upon the Lord, differed from the most sort of mourners and bewailers now-a-days. For we may see now-a-days, if the wife bewail the death of her husband, it is most commonly because she has had a loving head and governor taken from her. If the husband lament the departure of his wife, it is because he is bereaved of a faithful helper. If the son mourn for the death of his father, it is because there is taken from him, not only his father, but also his patron and defender. If the parents are sorry for the taking away of their children, it is because they want their dalliance, sport, and pastime with them, or such other worldly affections. If the prince take grievously the calling away of his subject from this world, it is because he lacketh a trusty soldier, a faithful captain, a wise counsellor, or profitable officer. If the subject lament the death of his prince, it is because he has lost his advantage, authority, or estimation. If the servant weep for his master, it is because with his master is departed his advantage and trust of worldly riches and friendship. If the master mourn for his servant, it is because there is taken from him a skilful, a diligent, or a faithful doer of his business; and such like causes as men grievously of every sort feel and lament. If the parson lament for his parishioner, it is most commonly because he seeth the breach of an honest household decays his tenths and profits. And if the parishioner mourn for his pastor, most commonly it is because he lost a good companion or profitable friend. If the bishop bewail the death of such as die in his diocese, it is most commonly because he is destitute of such an one as favoured much affection to set forth and do such things as he in worldly respects desired should go forward; or else, perchance, such an one as could excuse him whatever negligence or

fault he should perpetrate or commit for the time he were in office. If the diocese is sorry for the death of the bishop, it is because the one part, which is the clergy, fears lest there shall come another that will be more diligent and quick in doing his office, and see that they shall do the same. The other part, called the temporalty, lament, because they have lost such a one as, peradventure, fed well their bellies with bread and beef; or else was so remiss, that he would suffer all sin to go unpunished, and rather be a bearer of evil than a maintainer of good. Now this is such bewailing and mourning as heathens, publicans, and infidels may have. But wherefore the christian soul, that waits upon the Lord without quarrel or desperation, weeps and laments, read the psalm before named, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah; and there you shall find in the psalm these words: "We sat by the rivers of Babylon and wept, when we remembered thee, O Sion."

The chief cause of their weeping was, because the word of God was not preached, God's ordinances not ministered, nor the almighty God lauded and praised in the temple of Jerusalem, as God had commanded by his word. This is a most just and, also, a most worthy cause to weep for, while God punishes us, that for our sins, not only our quietness and wealth, but, also, the word of God, which is greater, is taken away, and his due honour given unto idols. For the children of Israel, perceiving that God's honour was defaced for their sins, wept as often as they remembered it, as may God give us grace to do the same. The like did St. Peter; he lamented not because he left all his goods for Christ's sake, but wept because by his denial of Christ he felt himself not constant in the faith and love of his Master. (Matt. xxvii.) So Mary Magdalen bewailed that she had offended Christ; and not because the world knew her to be a sinner. (Luke vii.)

St. John Chrysostom hath a notable saying: "He that feareth hell more than Christ, is worthy of hell." And that meant the prophet when he cried out, "What is there in heaven or in earth, that I prefer before thee, O Lord?" (Psalm lxxiii.) As though he had said: There is nothing can make me so glad as thy love towards me, nor any thing so sorry as thy displeasure, good Lord.

Thus the soul of the true christian waits upon the Lord in all troubles and adversities. and patiently bears the

punishments of sin; and not only bears the pain patiently, but also considers, what is the greatest loss that may happen unto him, by reason of troubles. Not the loss of worldly riches, lands, and promotions, nor the loss of health of body by sickness, neither the loss of the body itself by death, nor yet the loss of the soul into eternal pains. But the greatest loss that he regards, is the loss of the good will of Him that made him, and of great mercy redeemed him, and with much kindness has always nourished him.

That is to be seen in the prodigal son, who when he had spent all his goods in riotous living, and had brought himself to most miserable poverty, and to such extreme famine, that he would have been glad to have eaten the food prepared for the swine; besides the great heaviness of heart, that considered the time of prosperity, and compared it with his state of such extreme misery; yet nothing made him so sorry and pensive, as the calling to his remembrance how irreverently he had used his most gentle, loving, and benign father, who was not only liberal and free to his children, but also to his hirelings, who lacked nothing. (Luke xv.) This consideration of his offence towards his father, made him a great deal more sorry than all the pains he otherwise sustained. And thus must every christian wait upon the Lord, and then, doubtless, consolation will follow, as it appears by the same prodigal son, and by this psalm.

Moreover, if we mark with what dangers and troubles the soul seeks her Lord and Spouse Jesus Christ, in the mystical book of Solomon's Song, we shall see, with what attendance, diligence, and patience the soul waits upon Christ. "I sought him," saith the soul, "but I found him not. I called him, and he would not answer me. The watchmen of the city found me, and beat me, and wounded me. They that kept the walls took my robe from me. I require you, ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my spouse, tell him that I am sick with love." (Sol. Song v.) Note these words: "I sought him, and found him not, I called him, and he answered not." Was not this enough to have quite discomforted the heavy, sick, and troubled soul, that ran and cried to her love and husband Jesus Christ, and yet for the time was never the nearer? Further, in running and calling for him, the soul fell into the hands of her enemies, who robbed her of her

mantle ; and yet, notwithstanding these dangers, she cried out unto all that she met, that in case they found her spouse, they should tell him that she was sick with love of him.

Ponder these things altogether—first, to travail and cry, and not to profit—next, in travailing and crying, to lose all her goods, yea the mantle that she went in—thirdly, to put her life in danger with confessing Christ to be her Spouse, before such as hated him mortally. And yet what did this christian? Doubtless waited upon the Lord, without murmur or grudge. And in all these troubles, note, there is no complaint nor quarrel made of prayers that were not heard, of pains that for the time profited not, of the loss of goods and apparel, nor yet of the danger that she was in, from her and Christ her Spouse's enemies. But here was the weeping, lamentation, and sorrow, that Christ her Spouse could not be found, in whose love she burned so ardently, that all adversities grieved her not, neither did she at all esteem them ; but only the want of Christ was her grief and sorrow ; yet was she patient, and trusted still in the Lord.

The like may you see by the woman of Canaan, how she called upon the Lord for her daughter ; unto whom Christ made no word of answer. Further, his disciples were troubled and wearied by her importunate suit. Also, Christ called her in a manner no better than a dog ; yet neither the bitterness of his words nor the inhumanity of his apostles cared she for, but she waited still upon the Lord, and was not sorrowful for all the sharp words she suffered ; but only because the help of the Lord was not extended and bestowed upon her daughter, as she desired. (Matt. xv.) But what ensues of such a patient expectation, and sorrowfulness for God's absence ? Mark what the psalmist saith.

THE SECOND PART OF THE PSALM.

Verse 1. *For of him cometh my salvation.*
2. *He verily is my strength and my salvation ; he is my defence, so shall I not greatly fall.*

The second part declares why the troubled person seeks health of God.

Here first are three doctrines to be noted :

First, to know by God's word, that God can help—the second, that God will help—and the third, that the afflicted is bound boldly to require help of God. Whereof the troubled person must be assured by the scripture, or else he shall never find consolation.

Now to the first part, that God can help. This scripture is to be marked, that saith God is omnipotent, that is, able to do all things. So said he to Abraham, when he promised him the land of Canaan : "I am the God omnipotent ; walk before me, and be perfect." (Gen. xvii.) The same said Jacob, when Benjamin his young son was so urgently desired by his brethren to go into Egypt, when they lacked corn. "God omnipotent, said Jacob, can make the prince of Egypt favourable unto you." (Gen. xliii.) So did God tell Moses, that he was the Lord that appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even the almighty God. (Exod. vi.) The like is in the same book, when God had drowned Pharaoh and his host ; Moses gave thanks, and said his name was Almighty. (Exod. xv.) Thus in the word of God we may learn everywhere, as well by his name, as by his most marvellous works, that he is omnipotent, and there is nothing impossible unto him.

Even so the word of God declares that, as he is omnipotent, and can save ; so he is willing, and will save. King David saith, that "he saveth both man and beast." (Psalm xxxvi.) In another psalm he saith, "God saved him from all adversities." (Psalm xxxiv.) And again he saith, he will save all that trust in him ; and not only save, but also save for nothing. (Psalm xxxvi. lvi.) So God saith by the prophet Isaiah : "I will save thy children." (chap. xlix.) And in the same book it is declared, that God's hand is not weakened ; but that he can save, and will save. (chap. lix.) This willing nature of God to save, is manifestly opened unto us in all the prophets. (Jer. xv. xxiii. Ezek. xxxiv. Dan. xii. Hos. i. Zeph. iii. Zech. viii. ix. x.) And in St. Matthew Christ saith, he came to save such as were lost. (chap. xviii.) The same is to be seen in St. Luke, (chap. ix.) how that the Son of man came not to condemn, but to save. St. John the evangelist saith, his coming was to save the world. (chap. iii.) And St. Paul saith, he would have all men to be saved. (1 Tim. ii.)

Now as the word of God and the examples contained in the same, declare that God can and will help in the time of trouble and adversity; so it declares that men are bound to call and seek for help in the time of adversity. As we read in Isaiah the prophet, where God crieth out in this sort: "Ye that be athirst, come to the waters," &c. (Isaiah lv.) In St. Matthew, Christ commands all men that are troubled to come unto him. (Matt. xi.) Also in the psalms, he bids all men call upon him in the days of their heaviness, and he will hear them, and deliver them. (Psalm l.) Again, he wills us to ask, and it shall be given unto us. (Matt. vii. xviii. Mark xi. Luke xi. John xiv. xv. xvi. 1 John v.)

Now as these three doctrines are to be marked in the almighty God, so must they be grounded in the heart of the troubled person. And first he must give this honour unto God, that he alone is able to save, and none but he: as the prophet Isaiah saith of him. (chap. xlv.)

Then being thus persuaded, the afflicted person will not seek help of dead saints, nor at any other creature's hand, but at God's only. And as none giveth God the strength able to help, but it is of itself in God and with God: so is there none that can give God a will to help, but he of himself is inclined to have mercy upon the afflicted; and his mercy is most prone and ready to help the poor and miserable.

Hereof the afflicted Christian learns, that nothing inclines God to be merciful, but his own gentle and pitiful nature. So that the sinner may boldly resort unto him in Christ, because he is mercy itself; and not go astray first to seek mercy at dead saints' hands, and hope by their means at last to find God merciful and ready to help him.

And when the afflicted perceives, by the word of God, that he commands him to call upon him, and upon none other; he may take courage and be bold to come unto him. Be his sins ever so many, horrible, or filthy, yea, if in number they exceeded the sands of the sea, yet are they fewer always than his mercy. "If they be as red as scarlet, yet shall they be made as white as snow." (Isaiah i.) The book of Wisdom saith even so. Although we have sinned, Lord, we are thine, knowing thy greatness.

And where these doctrines are grounded, see what follows. In all the depth of anguish and sorrow, this follows, as this psalm saith: "Of him cometh my salvation.

He is my strength, my salvation, and my defence." The same may we see also in the dialogue between the christian soul, or Christ's church, and Christ, in the book of Solomon's Song. Were she ever so black and burned with the sun, were she ever so troubled with the vanities of the world, she cried out and said boldly unto Christ, "Draw me; we will run after thee." (Sol. Song, i.) And although the poor wretched soul be environed and compassed about with sin, troubles, and adversities, as the fair lily is hedged about with thorns; yet she trusts in her husband, that he will help her. And indeed her Spouse Christ comforts her most comfortably with these marvellous words: "Arise, haste thee, my spouse, my fair one, and come. Now winter is passed, the rain is gone and ceased." (chap. ii.)

That book of Solomon is to be read, to see how mercifully God comforts a soul troubled and deformed by sin; and yet God lays it not to the soul's charge, that has Christ for her husband. Also, there is to be seen that the soul is bold to seek and call for help of God her husband, and goes to no strange god for aid or succour, although she be burned with the sun, and a miserable sinner.

The like is to be seen in the case of the prodigal son. Although he was so beggarly, miserable, sinful, wretched, and unkind to his father; yet he said, "Even as I am, with my miseries, I will go to my father, and tell him, that I have offended against him and against Heaven." The father, when he saw him, spat not at him, reviled him not, asked no account of the goods he had viciously spent, laid not to his charge his filthy conduct; neither did he cast into his teeth how he had dishonoured him and his family; but when he saw him afar off, he was moved with compassion towards him, ran to meet him, took him about the neck, and kissed him. The son confessed his fault: and the father minding more the comfort of his wretched and beggarly son, than to repeat over to him his transgressions, commanded his servants speedily to fetch him robes and clothe him, gave him a ring upon his finger, and shoes to his feet, killed his fatted calf, and made merry and rejoiced with his lost son, that he was found again. (Luke xv.) Here is the state and condition of a soul that waiteth, as Asaph saith, for a time upon the Lord in trouble and heaviness, marvellously set forth.

See this wretched man, spoiled of all his goods, desti-

tute of all friends, shut out of all honest company, of a gentleman become a swineherd, of one that had once men to wait upon him, become now a waiter upon pigs! Once he gave others meat, and now all men refuse to feed him; formerly he was a man whose appetite delicate dishes scarcely could content—now his stomach is not satisfied till it be filled with swine's food: yet, moreover than that, he saw nothing behind him, nor before him, but misery and wretchedness! Behind him he left all his goods spent riotously; his estimation, parentage, such friends as he had when money was plenty, were lost; and also, as far as reason could see, his father's utter displeasure, and the reproach and ignominy of his alliance and kinsfolk, were purchased for ever. Before him he saw hunger and scarcity, a sort of filthy swine, and the best meat, draff and chaff for the sustenance and maintenance of his swinish life, in case he might have been so maintained; yet in the midst of these sorrows, attending in his spirit upon the mercy of his father, marvellously in the filth of a pig's sty, and in the pains and anguish of misery, hark what a wonderful doctrine he utters: "Oh! what abundance of bread is there in my father's house, and I starve here for hunger! I will arise, and get me to him, and confess my fault," &c. He saith not, Oh! what abundance of bread have my brother and my kinsfolk; but, "What abundance of bread is there in my father's house!" He said not, I will make my complaint to my brother; but said, "To my father."

Whereof is learned, that all penitent christian sinners do know, that the heavenly Father hath the bread of mercy, to satisfy their hungry desire; and that he is to be resorted unto in their sinful and troublesome state, and not any other in heaven, but he alone through Jesus Christ, who was killed to redeem and save the penitent faithful sinners of the world.

See now how this prodigal and outrageous son knew why he should seek help of his father, in the time of his vile misery and wretchedness.

First, he knew his father's power, and therefore said: "Oh! how great plenty of bread is there in my father's house!" believing that his father was able to give him meat sufficient. Next he was assured that his father was merciful, and would give him such things as he lacked; and, being thus persuaded, he returned boldly unto his

father, and to him he uttered all his grief; who was a great deal more ready to help, than his son was ready to ask help.

Of the same mind was the woman of Canaan: for although she found little comfort at the first, yet she argued so from the nature of man to the nature of Christ, that Christ cried out unto her, and said, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou desirest." For when she said, the dogs did eat of the crumbs that fell from their master's table, she knew that she herself, and all men in respect of God, were no more, nor yet so much as dogs in the respect of man. And when she perceived that man could be contented to spare his crumbs to the dogs, she knew right well, that man was not so merciful and liberal unto dogs as God unto sinners. Wherefore she stood with Christ constantly, and left not calling, until Christ gave her to know that she was indeed very well persuaded, both of his power which was able to help, and of his good will which was ready to help. For indeed, although she was a Canaanite, she knew that if a man shut not out dogs from his table, Christ would not shut from his mercy a sinful Canaanite.

The same persuasion made Mary Magdalen creep under the board to his feet with tears; there to receive and eat of his mercy, to quench the hunger and smart of her sins.

These examples declare, why the troubled may put their trust in God: because he is omnipotent, and can do all things; and he is merciful, and will help all penitent and faithful sinners. And so said this prophet, "Of him cometh my salvation." And he shows the cause why: "For he is my rock, my salvation, and my defence."

These three words declare marvellously, the nature of God, who alone helpeth; and also the faith of him that calleth for help.

As for God, the prophet first calleth him his "rock;" by this word he opens marvellously, how strong, firm, and sure, and how invincible he is against all troubles, adversities, and tempests, as well of the body as of the soul. In St. Matthew, (chap. vii.) the man that built his house upon the rock or stone, is called wise; because whatsoever winds blow, and whatsoever tempests arise, they cannot cast down the house, or overthrow the building; for it is grounded upon the stone. The stone is God and his word, the builder is the christian man, and the

building is the religion that he has learned of God by his word. And although we see God, our rock and sure stone, is not assaulted with stormy and tempestuous showers and rain; yet the builder and the building, that is to say, the christian man and his religion, are blown at; and such showers of trouble fall upon them, that, were not the rock firm and sure, all the building and the builder also, for man's part, would surely fall and come to utter ruin.

The experience of the same winds and floods, we may see in the Acts of the Apostles. For when Peter and the rest built the house of God, that is to say, taught men their salvation by the merits and passion of Christ, there arose such winds and floods, that the builders were put into prison; and the building in great danger. (Acts v.) When St. Stephen built the congregation with God's word in Christ, while he was building, such winds and floods of malice assaulted him, that his brains were knocked out. (Acts vii.) When Ananias and the rest planted and built the house of God, that is to say, converted the infidels unto the faith of Christ at Damascus, there arose such winds and tempests at Jerusalem, that Saul came from thence towards Damascus, with commission from the high priests, to kill the builders, and to overthrow all they had built. (Acts ix.) Let us leave off the examples of holy men, and see what happened to the head and chief captain of all saints and good builders, our Saviour Jesus Christ. When he called the world from ignorance to knowledge, from death to life, and from damnation to salvation, there arose such winds and storms, that, had he not been the rock itself of strength and invincible power, he had been quite overthrown, and his buildings turned upside down. .. He was no sooner born into the world, but straightway Herod's sword was whetted and ready to kill him. Within a little while after, the devil stirred up his own kinsfolk and countrymen, to cast him down from a hill-top, and to break his neck, (Luke iv.) and at length killed him indeed. But what was the outgoing of this builder? "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And what was the assurance of his building? That is to say, in what surety stood his disciples and followers in the midst of these winds and great storms? Doubtless, Christ commended them to the custody and protection of his heavenly Father, the rock and sure stone of all salvation;

from whom neither winds, floods, temptations, persecutions, death, sin, nor the devil himself, with all his company of wicked spirits, are able to remove the simplest of all Christ's flock. (John xvii. Matt. vi.) In the Revelation of St. John, (chap. xii.) there is a marvellous doctrine, what winds and floods shall blow and overflow this rock in the building, and builders, for the time of this life. There is a woman that had brought forth a man child; and by and by there was a foul great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, that would have devoured this child, before he had come to his inheritance and the kingdom appointed to him. And when he saw he could not prevail against the child, he cast water out of his mouth, as it had been a great stream, after the mother; but there were given her wings to escape. For the rock that she was builded upon was sure: that whatsoever winds or waters, that is to say, whatsoever troubles should happen, nothing could overthrow her. And so saith the psalmist here; "God being my rock and sure fortress, my soul and my body shall never be confounded." As he declares more openly by the two words that follow: "He is my strength and my salvation also," saith the prophet. As though he had said, I do not only know God to be sure, strong, and invincible: but also I know this his might, strength, and sureness, is my wealth and my salvation. For many men know, that God is the rock and strength of all powers, but none know that his power and strength is salvation for himself, but such as are God's indeed.

Therefore, seeing this faith that believeth God, particularly to save a private person, is only God's gift, and comes not of man; let us pray, that when we see how God has been the rock of salvation to others, he will be so unto us likewise. For it is a singular gift of God, to say boldly, steadfastly, and joyfully from the bottom of the heart unto him; "Thou, Lord, art my rock, my salvation, and my comfort." And he that feels in himself for himself, God to be his salvation, has such a treasure, that all treasures besides it are nothing to be esteemed; and he will not prize goods, lands, nor life, for this faith's sake.

But faith—so long as it comes no nearer the heart than the ear, the lips, the teeth, or the tongue, it is an easy matter to believe. As we see these rumblers up of the psalms, and the rest of God's word at this time in the church; where neither they that say them, nor they that

hear, understand any thing at all, nor are the more edified for that which is done or said in the church.* And I am assured, that if the priests felt in their hearts the vengeance of God to come, for this abusing the word of God, and the people knew what an incomparable treasure they have lost, by the taking away of the word of God in the vulgar tongue, the priest would weep as often as he said his service, and the people would sigh full heavily as oft as they heard it, and understood not what it meant. Wherefore, let every man pray to God, as the prophet here does, that he may know him, that he is the rock and salvation to him that so calls upon him.

The third word is 'Defence;' by which the prophet notes two marvellous doctrines; the one touching God, and the other touching man. That touching God is this: that, as God in himself is omnipotent, so is he of power to do all things for his creatures in general, both in body and soul. And as,to speak generally,† he can do all things for his creatures, so particularly, he is salvation to all that by faith believe in him. And as he is also salvation particularly, to such as believe in him; even so particularly, is he a defence, buckler, and protection of such as shall be saved; that neither sin, the devil, nor any troubles of the body, nor troubles, doubtfulness, anguish, perplexity, or heaviness of mind, shall hurt or damn them. The doctrine touching man by this word, 'Defence,' is this: that, as the faithful man has in himself this general knowledge with all men, that God is almighty to do all things, as he list, with his creatures generally; so particularly, he believes that he is able, and will save such as particularly believe for their salvation in him. And as the faithful particularly believes his salvation to be only in God; so does he also believe and challenge particularly, with the rest of his brethren in Christ, maintenance, perfection, and defence from all misadventures, jeopardies, and dangers, that may happen in this life, before he come to everlasting joys. God, therefore, give unto us grace with the prophet to say faithfully unto him, "Thou art my strength, my salvation, and my defence." Then, doubtless, we shall be assured of that which follows, "So shall I not greatly fall."

Of these words, "So shall I not greatly fall," we also

* He refers to the Latin service restored by queen Mary.

† By generally here is meant what is done for or by mankind at large; by particularly, what is done for or by individuals.

are taught and instructed very necessary lessons and doctrines; and first, the difference there is between the defence of God to his people in this life, and in the life to come.

As touching the defence of God towards his people in this life, it is marvellously set forth by Christ in his prayer a little before his death: where he prayed unto his Father not to take his apostles out of this world, but to preserve them in this world from sin. (John xvii.) So that he would that his friends, with God's defence, should abide for a time in the world; and Christ told them what they should have in the world, notwithstanding God's defence: "In the world," saith he, "ye shall suffer affliction; and ye shall weep, and the world shall laugh." (John xvi.) Again he said unto them, that he sent them forth as sheep amongst wolves. (Matt. x.) Whereby we may see, that God's favour and God's defence save not his very elect in this life from troubles and afflictions: for St. Paul saith, "As many as will live godly, shall suffer persecution." Therefore the Holy Ghost places the faithful congregation, the spouse of Christ, whom God loves and defends, among thorns and brambles: (Sol. Song ii.) and sometimes likens the faithful congregation unto a ship tossed upon the sea with danger of drowning: (Isa. liv.) sometimes unto a house whereupon blow all winds and weather: (Matt. vii.) and sometimes to a woman travailing with child, before whom stands a foul dragon, ready to devour both child and mother. (Rev. xii.) So that by this prophet's words, who saith, "he shall not greatly fall," and by these and other places, we learn, that in this life, such as God loves and defends from the eternal fire of hell, are, notwithstanding, for this life under great crosses and wonderful troubles: yet Christ wills us to be of good comfort, for he hath overcome the world; (John xvi.) and the prophet saith, "God is my rock and my salvation: I shall not greatly fall." And to consider the truth, such as God most strongly defends, and best loves in this world, suffer many times greatest troubles. (Proverbs iii. Heb. xii. Rev. iii.) Yea, and God begins with his friends sometimes first, and most sharply, as Peter saith. (1 Peter iv.) And St. Paul saith, "We are predestinate to be made like unto Christ in troubles, while we are in this troublesome world." (Rom. viii.) But the defence of God and his love in the world to come, is free from all bitterness and pain, and from all troubles and adversities, as it is most comfortably and joyfully written

in the Song of Solomon, (chap. ii.) where, for a time, the Lord defended his spouse that stood in the midst of sharp and pricking briers and thorns; at length he calls her to perpetual rest and consolation, assuring her that the winter is gone, and the tempestuous showers past; the sweet flowers appear, and the pleasant voice of the turtle is heard: meaning, that such as are loved and kept by God are sequestered and separated from all troubles and adversities in the world of bliss to come.

The like may you see in the Revelation of St. John, wherein he mystically, to set forth the pleasantness and unspeakable joys of heaven, saith, "It is paved with precious stones, and the gates thereof are also of pearls." And, moreover, "There is a light more light than the sun or moon, for the clarity* of God lighteneth it, and the brightness is the Lamb of God. There shall the elect dwell for ever, and the gates shall never be shut, neither shall there be any night there to trouble it." (Rev. xxi.)

The same is to be seen also in Isaiah the prophet, how in that life God's defence is in such as are saved, without all kinds of troubles and adversities. (Isaiah lxvi.)

Now here is to be noted, that as God's favour and defence in the world to come, in such as are saved, is void of all troubles and adversities; even so God's favour and his defence in this world, in such as shall be saved, is joined and annexed with troubles and adversities. Let us, therefore, be content with trouble and persecution, in his favour here in this life, or else doubtless we shall never have his favour and defence in the life to come, in joy and everlasting consolation.

There is yet another instruction in these words, "I shall not greatly fall:" that is, that the children of God shall not perish for any kind of trouble, and yet in this world they can lack no kind of affliction. All shall they suffer; and yet at length overcome all, as this prophet did. He was troubled, but yet not overcome; he fell, but not so far that he arose not again; and he was so troubled with the cross that God sent him, that he could speak nothing for the time; yet at length he said, God was his sure rock and his salvation. Thus God tries his people; but desperation he leaves to his enemies. God suffers his to feel in this world the punishment of sin, but he reserves the pain thereof in the world to come to his enemies, and

* Shining brightness.

to the reprobates. He makes his to be sorry for sin in this world; but such as are not his, he suffers to be careless and painless of sin in this life, that their damnation may be the more dolorous in the world to come: therefore, blessed be such as fall and fear, as the prophet saith, but not too far unto all wickedness and wantonness of life.

THE THIRD PART.

Verse 3. *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? Ye shall be slain all the sort of you: yea, as a tottering wall shall ye be, and like a broken hedge.*

4. *Their device is only how to put him out, whom God will exalt; their delight is in lies; they give good words with their mouth, but curse with their hearts.*

THE third part shows, how the persecutors of the innocent shall suddenly perish.

By the similitude and metaphor of a tottering wall, the prophet declares, how the Lord will suddenly destroy the persecutors of his people; for as the wall that is tottering and quivering with every wind and weather, is easily and suddenly overthrown; even so are the wicked and tyrannical persecutors suddenly destroyed; yea, when they are most strong and valiant in their own conceits. As may be seen by the mighty host of Sennacherib and Benhadad, the army of king Pharaoh, and others that persecuted the people of God, (1 Kings xx. 2 Kings viii. xviii. xix. Exod. xiv.) verily supposing their strength to have been able utterly to have oppressed God's people, whom they hated. . . So by this we learn, that the strength and persecutions of the wicked are not permanent nor strong, but transitory and feeble, destroyed and vanquished with the presence of God's favour towards his, as often as it pleases him to punish the malice and mischief of the wicked.

But there is one lesson particularly to be noted in this similitude of a trembling or tottering wall, wherewith the prophet sets forth the fall and confusion of the wicked, which is this; that when the wicked persecute the godly, and the least resistance of the world is stirred up by God against them, the Lord that stirs up the plague to punish them, strikes also their hearts with such trembling and fear, that one man in a good cause shall be able to with-

stand ten such wicked persecutors, whose conscience God has so feared, that they are not able to bear the countenance of man; no, not able even to overcome the terror of their own spirit, which bears them record, that as they in time past have fought against God and his cause, so now God justly fights against them, both with the fear of hell fire towards their souls, and with outward adversities towards their bodies. So God said that he would send such trembling and fear unto such as neither loved nor kept his laws, as is written by the holy prophet Moses. (Deut. xxviii.) The example whereof you may read also in Daniel the prophet, (chap. v.) that the emperor of the Chaldees, when he was in the midst of his strength, mirth, banquets, and jollity, saw no more than a hand write on the wall of his palace, that never spoke a word, showed no terrible sight of men of war, nor gave any blow in his palace; yet the emperor fell into such a trembling and fear at the sight thereof, that all his limbs, as it were, stood him in no stead.

Christ gave no blow, but merely asked his murderers whom they sought for; and yet they fell flat and prostrate to the ground; (John xviii.) so that the wicked persecutors of the godly are aptly and properly likened and compared to a tottering and trembling wall. For as soon as ever the blasts of God's wrath and judgment are moved and kindled against them, they are so quivering and comfortless, that they would take them to be most their friends who would soonest despatch them out of the world; as Christ said aptly of them, they would pray the mountains to fall upon them. (Luke xxiii.) As long as God appears to be asleep, and suffers the blessed to fall into the hands of the wicked to be crucified and slain as they please, they are more strong and more cruel than lions; but when God arises, and takes the defence of his poor people, then they are more fearful than the hart or trembling hare: as we see when harmless Jacob passed homeward into his country from Mesopotamia, such as he never gave a blow nor spake a foul word unto, trembled at his coming, as though he had been in battle array with thousands of soldiers. (Gen. xxxiii.) The like may we see by the brothers of Joseph, when he spake most gently unto them, yea and told them that he was their brother, there was such a terror, and such fear struck their consciences for persecuting him, that they could make no answer. When the

children of Israel should come into the land of Canaan, the Lord said he would send before them his fear, to amaze and astonish the people of the country, that their strength should do them no harm. (Exod. xxiii.)

The fury of the wicked may seem in his own eyes to be stable, firm, and constant, but indeed there is nothing more trembling or tottering, as we may see at this present day. Such as persecute the lively and feeble flock of Christ, and tyrannously hold the neck of the godly under the yoke of idolatry, have no ground, no certainty, nor any assurance more than the flesh and blood that favour them, by whose favour they oppress the truth, and persecute the lovers of it: so that in case flesh and blood should fail them, they would be in such trembling and quivering, that they would do whatsoever they were commanded to do, to be delivered from fear and terror.

As we may mark and see in the bishop of Winchester Gardiner, and also Bonner the bishop of London, when king Henry the eighth suspected them both to be favourers of the pope, the capital enemy of Christ and his church. Winchester fell into such a trembling and fear, that with all haste he wrote his purgation in a book named, True Obedience; and Bonner set an epistle before it, they both crying out against the pope, as against a tyrant and false usurper of authority in this realm, although they thought nothing less. Thus we may see how inconstant, trembling, and quaking, these tottering wicked persecutors of God's words are. I could declare more of their religion to be of the same conditions; but because these two, and Tonstall, the bishop of Durham, are known openly to the world by their books to be such, I speak only of them.

When the prophet has declared that the persecutors of the godly shall suddenly perish, he tells the cause why they shall perish: "Because they devise how to put him down, whom God will exalt." And after the prophet has shown that the cause of this fall and punishment is their conspiracy against God's elect, he sets forth by what means the wicked use to depose, persecute, and tumble down the people of God: "By lies, and by imagining of falsehood and untruth." And when he has declared that the wicked purpose to bring their case and matter against the godly with lies, he shows after what sort and fashion the lies are used by wicked men: "to bring mischief to purpose." This is the letter of the psalm concerning the third part of

it. Now there is in each of these sentences profit to be gathered by the reader or hearer of it.

First is to be noted the conspiracy and treason of the wicked against God. If it please the Lord to favour and advance one, the nature of the wicked is to deface what God would have honoured, as much as may be. As God bare favour, and advanced Abel; Cain wrought treason, and killed his brother, for the love that God did bear him. (Gen. iv.) The Lord appointed Samuel to rule; the wicked people misliked that which God best approved. (1 Sam. viii.) God would exalt David; Saul, Absalom, and Ahithophel, would prefer themselves. Again the Lord appointed Noah to teach the people to beware of the universal flood; the people preferred liars, unto whom God never gave his Holy Spirit. (Gen. vi. vii.) God elected Jeremiah the true prophet; the people advanced Pashur the false prophet. (Jeremiah xx.) The Lord exalted his dear Son, and willed the world to learn of him; the people preferred the pharisees, and desired the judge to hang Christ. (Matt. iii. xvii. xxvii.) God commanded his word only to be taught; but the world plucks it down, so that either they entirely refuse the word, or else they will have it no otherwise than it is authorized and made true by man. (John v.) God saith, that which is wisdom before the world, is foolishness before him. (1 Cor. i.) The world recompenses God most arrogantly with the like, and accounts all his wisdom and learning foolishness in respect of worldly wisdom, counsel, and religion. But what saith the prophet shall become of these Nimrods and controllers of God? "They shall quickly fall, and be destroyed as a tottering wall."

Here we see how controlling and amending of God's works at length speeds, and what is the end of these persecuting giants of God's afflicted. They fight, they fare foully, they move heaven and earth to alter the purpose and mind of God; but "He that sitteth in heaven laugheth them to scorn." (Psalm ii.) And they themselves, who thus wickedly use Christ and his members, fall down and come to nought, as old, rotten, and dusty walls.

And in the other part, where these shameless tyrants conspire against Christ and his people, by lies and falsehood, is declared the filthiness of their consciences, which are so far past shame and honesty, that they care not, so they may obtain their wicked purpose, how craftily

or falsely they calumniate any sayings or doings of God or man; as the devil, their father, when God had exalted man into paradise, wished him out of it, and began to work man's destruction by calumniating and lying upon God's own word. (Gen. iii.) When God had set up David to reign, Absalom, his own son, thinking the better to pull his father down, lied falsely upon him to the people, and said, that there was no judge appointed in Israel to hear causes, and to end them, between man and man. (2 Samuel xv.) So slandered he his father, a man of good justice; and advanced himself, who never knew what justice meant. The good prophet Elias likewise, whom God appointed to warn the people to beware of sin, king Ahab, to disgrace him, falsely spake of him, and said that he was the troubler of the commonwealth. (1 Kings xviii.) So of Christ, whom God elected to save the world from death and damnation, the wicked sort of the world said, "He hath saved others, but he cannot save himself." (Matt. xxvii.) Again, God sent him to be amongst the troubled to comfort them; but such as wanted consolation, when they saw him, prayed him to depart out of their country, because by his presence they lost their swine. (Matt. viii. Mark v. Luke viii.) God said that Paul was a chosen vessel, to bear his name before the Gentiles. Tertullus and the other Jews said, that he was one of those that molested all the world. (Acts xxiv.) Even so at this time there is no honest or virtuous man, whom God exalts to speak the truth, but the wicked say, He is a heretic, a schismatic, and a traitor; but seeing it is no other than always has been accustomed falsely to be laid to such as God loveth, it must be borne patiently.

But now the prophet shows how these liars and envious persecutors use their lies: "They give fair words with their mouth, but they curse with their heart." By these words we may learn, that there are three ways that lies do harm; the one, when they are openly and plainly used; the other, when open falsehood outwardly is cloaked with pretended truth; and the third, when they are dissembled outwardly, and yet in the heart they lie hid, tarrying for a time when they may be put abroad, to do mischief, and to work the destruction of the godly. But forasmuch as the devil, the father of all lies, (John viii.) knows that such as he inspires with lies, cannot do harm with their lies,

except they are used as the persons are qualified, amongst whom the lies must be sown; he teaches his disciples to use them as opportunity and occasion shall serve.

Manifest and uncovered lies satan causes to be used, amongst such as do not know or love the truth; for those lies establish and confirm the wicked in their error and wickedness. As for example: Absalom and Ahithophel told the people as many lies almost as they said words against king David; (2 Sam. xv.) and when they were by Absalom's fair words alienated from king David, and bent unto his son, because he promised to use justice to every man, and lawful favour; after Absalom came to Hebron, and had on his side Ahithophel, his father's chief counsellor, he lied openly, and the people more and more were established in error and treason. The like is to be seen in the book of Numbers, (chap. xiv.) that when such returned out of the land of Canaan as were sent to view the goodness and strength of the country, ten of the twelve spies brought the people into such a terror and fear, that they thought it impossible to recover the land. Thus the people, being in an error, manifest lies against God, Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, might be used well enough and prevail.

In matters of religion it is the same amongst such as be deceived and in error; manifest lies take place, and do as much harm as the devil requires to be wrought by them. As amongst the Chaldees, such as most commended the idol of fire, were most esteemed. Amongst the Egyptians, such as most blasphemously could speak in the defence of witchcraft and sorcery, were taken for the best men. (Exod. vii. viii.) Such as could best defend the honour of Baal, amongst the idolatrous Jews, had most reverence and honour. (1 Kings xvii. xviii.) Amongst the pharisees, he that could speak most for the maintenance of men's traditions, was taken for the worthiest man. (Matt. xv.) And now amongst the papists, he that can best defend papistical idolatry and superstition, is highest preferred. But, as I said, this use of lies and falsehood takes place in none but in such as the devil, the god of this world, will not suffer to have the word of truth known. (2 Cor. iv.) And this use of lies and falsehood does not train men unto error and heresy; but establishes men in them, who do not know the truth.

There is another sort of people, who are the faithful, at

whom the devil hath indignation, and labours with all diligence to deceive; against whom the use of manifest lies, he knows, cannot prevail: for such as know and love the truth, do abhor falsehood. Wherefore, if the devil prevail against them, it is by another use of lies than he uses to the other sort of the world.

This use of lies is of two sorts; as we see by the word of God. The one is to make an evil thing to appear good, under the pretence of good; and a false thing to appear true, under the pretence of truth. As we may see how the devil, under the pretence of good and profit unto Eve, made her eat of the apple which was forbidden. (Gen. iii.) Cain, under the pretence of friendship, brought Abel into the field, and killed him. (Gen. iv.) Saul, under the pretence of amity, bade David to feast with him, and so meant to have slain him. (1 Sam. xvii. xviii.) Absalom, under the colour of justice and love to the commonwealth, sought his father's death, and made his subjects traitors. (2 Samuel xv.) There are many more such examples in the word of God, whereby is declared, that the devil, by his disciples, uses lies many ways: sometimes to establish men in error, that are in error already; sometimes to deceive such as are in the truth; but then manifest lies are not used, but rather lies conveyed, covered, and cloaked with the mantle of truth and verity; as we may see by the examples before specified; howbeit, many times this use of lies, howsoever it pretends truth, cannot deceive men. Then, rather than the devil will miss his purpose, he teaches another use of lies, which is more dangerous and painful to the godly, than any beforementioned: of which use the prophet speaks in this place, saying, "They speak fair with their tongues, but think evil in their hearts."

This is a perilous kind and use of lies; for it does one or both of these two great mischiefs; that is to say, either at length it overcomes the truth, or else mortally persecutes the truth that will not be overcome; as we may see by Esau. He used a great while fair speech and gentle manners with Jacob his brother; but in his heart he said, "When my father dies, I will kill my brother." (Gen. xxvii.) Again, Absalom spake fair to his father, and asked him leave to go to Hebron, to pay there the sacrifice that he promised, whilst he was in Geshur of Syria, to offer unto God; but in his heart, he went thither to raise

David his father's subjects against him. (2 Samuel xv.) Certain came to Christ, and said, "Master, we know that thou art true, and that thou teachest the ways of God in truth;" (Matt. xxii.) yet in their hearts they came to catch him in a case of treason if they could.

This use of lies is very dangerous; for it lies in the heart hid secretly, expecting and looking for time convenient, when and how it may break forth to serve the turn; yet the devil is the father of lies, and the wicked man's and woman's hearts the temple of the devil, whilst they being ashamed or afraid to utter them, hold outwardly with the truth, which inwardly they mortally hate, until they may take occasion to do outwardly as they would. We see it in Cain, Esau, Absalom, the pharisees, and others. Yea, our own age has too much experience of this use of lies; for how many within this twelvemonth spake fair of God and his word, and showed themselves outwardly as friendly as could be unto them?* But what their conscience and hearts were inwardly, now appears. Doubtless, what they hated deadly in their spirits, that they most extolled with their mouths; for now they are gone from the truth outwardly, which inwardly they never loved. And by the use of their lies, they train as many as they may to be partakers of their evils; and such as they cannot, by the use of lies, draw unto their sect, they persecute by violence and tyranny, and compel with extreme punishment and hatred, in lands, goods, and body.

Thus may we see by this prophet which way the wicked persecuted the godly, and molested the weak members of Christ, who wished all men good, and no men harm—even with lies and falsehood, and used many crafty and subtle ways. Whereof we are not instructed by the prophet only to know this poison of the devil concerning lies, and the divers and manifold use and practice of them; but, also, that christians are most in danger of them, yet must be contented for Christ's sake to bear them, and circumspectly to beware that they are not deceived by them.

* During the reign of Edward VI. These expositions were written by Hooper in the early part of his imprisonment by queen Mary.

THE FOURTH PART.

Verse 5. *Nevertheless, my soul, wait thou still upon God; for my help is in him.*
6. *He truly is my strength and my salvation; he is my defence, so that I shall not fall.*
7. *In God is my health and my glory, the rock of might; and in God is my trust.*
8. *Oh! put your trust in him always, ye people; pour out your hearts before him: for God is our hope. Selah.*

The fourth part repeats more at large the declarations of the first and the second part.

The fifth and sixth verses are word for word as the first and the second were; only there is left out in these two verses the word 'greatly;' for before he said, he should not 'greatly' fall. Which word may be taken two ways very comfortably by the reader and hearer, if it be well marked and believed.

The first way is, that the prophet means not that the people of God shall not fall, for that is against the scripture, for "The just man falleth seven times in the day." (Prov. xxiv.) Again, "If we say we have no sin in us, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i.) Now, whereas sin inseparably dwells in all men whilst they live upon the earth, there are faults and falls before God on man's part, in whom this sin dwells; yet God of his mercy, for the blood and death of Christ, does not account these inseparable sins to be falls; but loves the person, preserves him, and will not impute nor lay any of those falls or faults unto his charge, but in Christ esteems him justified and clean, as though he were of himself so indeed. (Rom. viii.) And thus the prophet saith, that of God's part, and by our being accepted into his favour, through Christ, the faithful falleth not; that is to say, his sin is not accounted damnable, nor laid to his charge, for Christ's sake; as St. Paul writes to the Romans. (chap. viii.)

Another way it may be taken; that a christian has testimony in his spirit by the Spirit of God, that he is so elected, chosen, and ordained of God to eternal salvation; that whatsoever the world, the flesh, the devil, or sin shall do, yet he stands assured of God's election, grace, strength,

and fidelity, that he shall never fall to damnation, but arise again, and be called from his falls, whatsoever they are. And yet this most sure and comfortable knowledge will not give him a license or liberty to sin, but rather keeps him in a fear and love of the strong and mighty God, in whose hands he is, and kept from the great fall of eternal damnation, from which he was delivered from the beginning with God. So that you may learn from this place, what perseverance is, in the meditation and contemplation of God's most holy word and promises.

At first they seem unto the flesh things impossible, as we may see by Nicodemus, who was as ignorant as could be at the beginning, when he came first to school to Christ. (John iii.) But when a man has been exercised awhile in it, he feels more sweetness in the promises of God; as we see by this prophet. For after he had borne the cross of affliction a little while, and learned the nature of God, how merciful he is to sinners, he said, "Although I fall, yet it shall not be greatly." But when he had tarried in the school of Christ, and learned indeed what he was, and that he was able to perform his mercy, he said plainly, whatsoever sin, the devil, the world, the flesh, hell, heaven, or the earth, would say against him, he should not fall. These two interpretations are to be noted; for, whichever we use, we may find comfort and unspeakable consolation.

Now, when he has declared that he shall not fall into God's eternal wrath and displeasure, he shows how this certainty of eternal salvation came unto him; and why God had so mercifully and strongly warded and fenced him against all temptations and perils of damnation.

It is, saith he, because God is his health; that is to say, one that has not only taken him from the sickness and danger of sin, the tyranny of the devil, and the damnation of the law; but also preserves him in the same state, that he fall not again into the sickness and peril that he was delivered from. Whereof we learn, that it is not man's labours, nor man's works, that help a sinner, and save a condemned soul; but it is the free work and undeserved mercy of almighty God. Wherefore we are taught that "there is no health, but in God alone."

Then saith the prophet also, that in God is his glory. Of which word he notes two things; the one touching God alone, and the other touching God and himself.

The glory that touches God alone is, that this troubled prophet pondered, in the heaviness and anguish of his mind, the number and strength of his enemies, the devil, the flesh, sin, the world, and the bitter accusation of God's laws, that truly accused and painfully grieved his conscience for sin. On the other side, in faith, he considered how the scripture declared that God was merciful, even unto the greatest sinners of the world. And he learned, also, by the word of God, that God had made promise unto sinners to be merciful. He considered further, that God had many times been merciful towards sinners. And he found likewise by the scripture, that God, to perform his mercy, would not spare his own dearly beloved Son, to redeem man from his sin with his own precious blood and painful death.

Thus weighing the strength of the devil and sin on the one part to condemn, and the strength of God's mercy in Christ Jesus on the other part to save, and perceiving the riches, abundance, and strength of God's mercy to be more available to save than all the power and strength of the devil and sin to condemn; for the great victory that God takes over such strong enemies, the prophet triumphs in the glory of God joyfully and thankfully; extolling him for his mercy and power, who has broken the serpent's head, and spoiled him of his prisoners. So we use to do, when any man by valour defends us from our enemies; we extol and magnify him for his victory and conquest.

This glory the prophet gave in this psalm to God, when by faith he saw him conquering hell, sin, the devil, the accusation of the law, desperation, the flesh, and the world. And the same glory every faithful creature gives unto God, at the end of the Lord's prayer, when he saith, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." (Matt. vi.) By which words we know, that howsoever the devil and wicked people take upon them to usurp by violence, war, and tyranny, and live ever so princely in pomp and pride, they are but usurpers, if they come to it wrongfully, for the kingdom appertains unto God. And howsoever they extend their power, in God's sight they are no stronger than a bruised reed or broken staff; for the power is God's. And what glory soever they feign and flatter themselves to have, it is but withered hay and vile dust in the sight of God.

But now the prophet, by the eye of faith, seeing this

glorious triumph, strength, and power in God, saith, that in this glorious, almighty, and triumphant God is his glory; and desires to have part of that victory, and of that marvellous majesty. And as the psalm saith, he calls and names the God of glory, 'his glory.' O marvellous and unspeakable boldness and constancy of faith! A man nothing but sin by nature, in the sight of God nothing but earth and ashes, full of misery and wretchedness, by nature corrupt, the very enemy of God, a vessel prepared unto all dishonour, ignominy, shame, and perdition, contemned through sin, and shamed before all creatures; and yet now, with all these dishonours, by faith, he saith, the King of glory is his glory, and that the conqueror of all dishonour is his shield and buckler.

On the other part, who can think or speak any thing thankful to such a King of glory, and most mighty conqueror, that abhors not, by mercy, to be the honour and glory of so vile, sinful, and wretched a thing as man is? whose eyes see no filth of sin in penitent sinners, whose presence refuses not the company of the sick and miserable, whose strength comforts the weak, whose mercy rejoices the comfortless, whose life expels death, whose health banishes sickness, whose love vanquishes hatred, whose immortality gives everlasting life, and who crowns us with endless pity and compassion in perpetual joys. (Psalm. ciii.)

Thus the prophet, after he had perceived the almighty God in himself gloriously to be void of all troubles, dolors, and other adversities, and that he had also gloriously conquered the captains of all adversities, hell, death, satan, and sin; he challenged by faith, and craved by God's promise, to be partaker of God's glory in this point. And, doubtless, he that can feel in his heart that God is his glory, shall take no dishonour nor shame by all the works of the devil, sin, or the world. Therefore, many times, in reading or thinking of the psalms, or other parts of the holy scripture, it is expedient to meditate and pray, that the word we speak or pray, may be unto us as much salvation, comfort, and glory, as we perceive God has appointed in it for us. And when we say with our mouth to God, "Thou art my salvation, my glory, my rock, and my trust;" let us cry, "Lord, increase our faith; help us for thy name sake constantly to believe thee to be unto us indeed in spirit, as we speak of thee outwardly

with our mouth." (Luke xvii.) For in case the heart understand not, nor believe the words we speak with our mouth, we honour God in vain, as the scripture saith. (Isaiah xxix. Matt. xv.) Let us therefore pray, as St. Paul teaches us, saying, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the mind also." (1 Cor. xiv.)

When the prophet has by faith assured himself of God's favour, he exhorts all the christian congregation to do the same, saying: "O put your trust in him always, ye people," &c.

Here the prophet teaches, what the minister of the church, the bishop, and others should do, when they understand the scripture, and learn by it fear and faith, love and hope in God. They are bound to teach the congregation the same scriptures for their salvation. Whereby is condemned the use of the scripture in an unknown tongue; which is directly against God's word. (1 Cor.xiv.) And here kings and rulers are also taught to see that their subjects, tenants, and servants are taught to understand the word of God; likewise the father and the mother, the master and the mistress; who are bound to know for their salvation the word of God, and to teach it unto others under their governance. Therefore, in the end of the verse is put 'Selah;' as though he had said, Happy are those that put their trust in the Lord, and teach others to do the same; and cursed are those that trust not in the Lord, and teach others to do the like.

THE FIFTH PART.

Verse 9. *As for the children of men, they are but vain: the children of men are deceitful upon the weights; they are altogether lighter than vanity itself.*

10. *Oh! trust not in wrong and robbery; give not yourselves to vanity: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*

The fifth part shows how man's power is not to be trusted unto.

The prophet by no means would have men to put their trust in flesh and blood; in case they do, they must needs perish. For when miserable man trusts in vain vanity,

which is man; he can be no less than vanity itself, in whom he has trusted. And this is one misery and wretchedness; a man to be deceived of help and succour, where he most trusted to have been holpen and succoured! Thus must it happen to those who trust in men; for men of the most excellency and greatest authority, riches, and power in the world, are but vanity: as the prophet saith: "Now as they are, so is their help. And as their help is, so is the comfort and consolation of such as seek help at their hands." Those that are trusted unto, are but flesh and blood: the best of flesh and blood is but vanity: the consolation and help of vanity is misery and wretchedness; wherefore, the prophet exhorts all men to beware they seek not aid and comfort of man, for he is but vain. The Israelites used the Egyptians for their help against their enemies; but the more flesh conspired together, the worse success had all the battles they fought. Now we see men that have their trust in men, suffer much trouble and misery in the world, because the help they trust in is of inferior strength and power to the troubles and adversities that they are cumbered withal. And the word of God declares that such men as trust in vanity, have not only worldly adversities against them, but also for their so doing, trusting in flesh, they are accursed of God, as the scripture saith: "Cursed be he that trusteth in man." (Jeremiah xvii.) So that we see marvellous and unspeakable harm come of the trust in man; first, miseries of the world; and next, the enmity and curse of God; for he that puts his trust in man, with that one act and doing, does two horrible evils: he deceives himself; for the vanity that he trusteth in cannot save him: and he dishonours God, who only can save, by putting his trust in mortal man that cannot save; and so makes God of man, to God's high displeasure and dishonour.

Every Christian man, therefore, should forsake flesh and blood, and trust in the Lord almighty, maker of heaven and earth, as the prophet did a little before, when he said, that in God was his glory; who could defend him from all hurts present, past, and to come, whatsoever they were.

The like may we see in St. Paul, who said: "God forbid that I should glory in anything, saving in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world:" (Gal. vi.) that is; Because I put all my trust of salvation, saith St. Paul, in

Him that was crucified, the world takes me for a heretic, and so persecutes me; but yet it overcomes me not, neither takes it away my glory, my consolation, and my crown of eternal joys. For even as the world persecutes me with fire, sword, and all other crucifyings; so I crucify the world again, testifying by the word of God, that their living is nought, and their faith and trust worse. So that as they crucify me with worldly trouble, in like manner I crucify the world again with the word of God, and speak against it, bearing testimony that it is the enemy of God, and shall perish eternally: but this I do, saith St. Paul, "because I glory in nothing, saving in Christ crucified."

Thus the psalmist teaches all men to put their trust in Christ, and not in sinful man; which is not only vanity, but also, "If vanity were laid in one balance, and man in the other, yet, of both, man were the more vanity. Therefore, man is not to be trusted unto," saith the prophet.

And for a further declaration that man is more vain than vanity, he openly declares in the process of this psalm, that man is given, besides vanity, to wrong and robbery, which two evils increase man's misery. For man is not only born vain vanity, but also in time, by wicked living, adds wrong and robbery unto vanity, and so makes vanity more vain and damnable than it was before.

Now this robbery and wrong is done two manner of ways—to God and to man. He that putteth his trust for salvation in any other, saving in God, loses not only his salvation, but also robs God of his glory, and does God manifest wrong, as much as lieth in him; as the wicked people amongst the Jews did, who said, as long as they honoured and trusted unto the queen of heaven, all things prospered with them; but when they hearkened to the true preachers of God's word, all things came into a worse state, and they were overwhelmed with scarcity and trouble. (Hosea ii. Jeremiah xliv.)

He also that puts his trust and confidence in any learning or doctrine besides God's word, not only falls into error, and loses the truth; but also, as much as lies in him, he robs God's book of his sufficient truth and verity, and ascribes it to the books of men's decrees; which is as much wrong to God and his book, as may be thought or done. In which robbery, or rather sacrilege, no man should put his trust, as the prophet saith.

Another way wrongs are done unto man—when the rich and sturdy of the world, by abusing of friendship, oppress, rob, and spoil the poor. And by his thus doing, first, he deceives himself; for evil-gotten goods cannot long prosper, neither can any family that is advanced by fraud, craft, or subtlety, long time endure. Then he deceives the simple and poor, who trust upon the outward show of his port and estimation, which glitters in the world as a vain-glorious and deceivable beauty and honour, and marks neither how wickedly the glory of the robber and doer of wrong sprang up, nor how miserably God has ordained it to fall again.

But seeing carnally, when he sees a vain man in vanity prosper for a time, he trusts in this vanity, pampered up with robbery and wrong, until such time as vanity fades, and he much laments that he put so much vain hope in vanity. But grant that honour and riches abound by God's gift and truth, yet were they not given for men to trust in, but for men to give God more thanks, and to help the poor with them from injuries of oppression, and need of hunger, thirst, and poverty. Therefore, the prophet saith: "Although riches abound, yet men should not put their hearts upon them:" that is to say, men should not trust in them, nor keep them otherwise than their use or keeping serves to the glory of God; in abundance to be liberal, and in time of need to be careful not to keep them for private advantage, but, as Joseph did, to save the multitude from scarcity and penury. (Gen. xli.) Thus the prophet exhorts all men to beware they put not their trust in men; for both they and all that they have of worldly things are transitory, vain, and inconstant.

THE SIXTH PART.

Verse 11. *God spake once, and twice I have also heard the same, that power belongeth unto God;*
12. *And that thou, Lord, art merciful; for thou rewardest every man according to his work.*

The sixth part shows that God has promised to help the afflicted, &c.

In the book of Job is the same phrase and manner of

speech: "The Lord spake once, and will not repeat the same again:" (Job xxxiii.) that is as much as to say, that the word of God is so sure, that it cannot be made frustrate, nor changed by any means. So saith this prophet Asaph, "God spake once," which standeth sure for ever, and cannot be altered.

This word of God relates to the verses before; wherein he opened the vanity of man, or his insufficiency to help himself or others in trouble, which cannot be changed, nor ever shall be; but being flesh it is vanity, be it ever so holy; as Adam called his best son the holy martyr, Abel, that is to say in the Hebrew tongue, 'vanity,' (Gen. iv.) perfectly knowing that all flesh, by sin, was vile and vain, and therefore not to be trusted unto.

This once speaking of God is also referred unto the text that follows, which declares two virtues in God, power and mercy; power to punish his enemies, and mercy to recompense his faithful afflicted: and this is so true, that it shall never be made false; the wicked shall feel God's strength in damnation, and the faithful shall feel God's mercies in salvation; not because their works deserve it, but because God of his mercy is so contented to bless the poor faithful workman.

Now the prophet saith, he heard it twice at God's mouth; that is to say, he knew God had made a promise of mercy to save the faithful penitents, and of justice to punish the impenitent sinner. And this he heard in the time of the law of nature, by reading Moses's books, and also by the Holy Ghost in his own time, when, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he wrote this psalm and the rest of his prophecies. The same have we likewise heard, first, by reading the books of Moses; next, by reading the scriptures of the prophets; and thirdly, by reading the New Testament; which I pray God give us grace to believe and follow. Amen.

AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

SEVENTY-THIRD PSALM.

THE ARGUMENT.

The matter and argument of this psalm is a consolation for those who are wont to be much moved and afflicted, when they see the ungodly flourish and prosper in all wealth and pleasure; and contrariwise, the godly and good people oppressed with poverty, and all other calamities and afflictions; as you may see Asaph treat of this matter in this his psalm. The same you may see also in king David, in his thirty-seventh psalm; wherein he exhorts men not to judge amiss of God nor to leave off godly conversation, although the best are punished, and the worst escape free. These two psalms, treating of one matter, are to be read and known of us in these perilous days, lest the hatred and persecution that happen to God's truth, and to the lovers thereof, might unhappily make us to judge of God, and to forsake his truth, as many have done; and daily the number of them increases, with the decrease of God's honour, and the increase of their own damnation. For now Christ separates the chaff from the corn, the rust from the metal, and hypocrisy from truth. If we will not, or cannot abide the hammer, or trying-pot that God sets us in, to explore and search whether our faith will abide the fire of trouble and persecution, or not; if we suffer not, then all our religion is not worth a straw. For it is not words that prove faith, but deeds; if it abide the trial, it is true; and the more it is tried, the finer it will be, and at length be brought into such fineness,

that corruption shall never hurt nor harm it in the world of grace and virtue. God, therefore, grant us grace to suffer his trial and search strongly, patiently, and thankfully. Amen. (Matt. xxvi. 1 Tim. i. 2 Tim. iv. 1 John ii. 1 Cor. iii. Heb. xi. Mat. x. James ii. Gen. xii. xv. xvii. xxii. Rom. iv. Matt. vii.)

THE ORDER OF THE PSALM.

I. The text and letter of the psalm.
II. The paraphrase, or plain explanation of the text and letter of the psalm.
III. The principal parts, and most notable doctrines contained in the psalm.

THE TEXT AND LETTER OF THE PSALM OF ASAPH, WITH THE PARAPHRASE, OR PLAIN EXPLANATION.

Verse 1. *Truly God is loving unto Israel; even unto such as are of a clean heart.*

God loves the godly, although they are afflicted; and hates the ungodly, although they are in prosperity. The Lord is loving and merciful to such as are afflicted, and especially if their hearts are pure and clean, and judge nothing amiss of God, whether they see the good oppressed, or the evil exalted. In their hearts they murmur not at God's doings, and in their minds they find no fault with God's order and providence. (Matt. v. Luke vi. Rev. iii. Prov. iii. Heb. xi.)

Verse 2. *Nevertheless, my feet were almost gone; my treadings had well near slipt.*
3. *And why? I was grieved at the wicked; I do see also the ungodly in such prosperity.*

Yet, notwithstanding, when I saw the good afflicted, and the evil prosper, it troubled my mind; so that, in a manner, I was forced and compelled, through indignation, to judge of God as other evil men did, and grievously offended his high majesty, by thinking his doings not impartial, in troubling the good, and quieting of the bad. (Psalm xxxvii. lxxiii. Hab. ii.)

Verse 4. *For they are in no peril of death, but are lusty and strong.*

I perceived further, saith the prophet, that the wicked lived not only quietly and pleasantly, but also died, apparently, without heaviness or any great torments. Besides all these felicities, pleasures, and ease for their own parts in this world, when they die they leave also pleasant and delectable mansion-houses, great riches, and large possessions to their children.

Verse 5. *They come into no misfortunes like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men.*
6. *And this is the cause that they be so holden with pride, and overwhelmed with cruelty.*

If any miss of loss and damage in this world, it is they; if sickness flies from any, it flies from them; so that much felicity and little adversity cause them neither to know God, their neighbours nor themselves.

Verse 7. *Their eyes swell for fatness, and they do what they lust.*

Such as flourish with riches and authority were proud and arrogant; for all things come so abundantly unto them, that they have more than they look for.

Verse 8. *They corrupt other, and speak of wicked blasphemy; their talk is against the Most High.*

They afflict and cruelly persecute the good and innocent, and they are come to this insolence and pride, that they would not only that their abomination should be known, but they themselves boast of it, and in the greatest abomination most extol and magnify themselves.

Verse 9. *For they stretch forth their mouth unto the heaven, and their tongue goeth through the world.*

They are so blinded and deceived with the felicity and trouble of this world, that they spare not God nor godly men; but speak against both, and do their own will and pleasure.

Verse 10. *Therefore fall the people unto them, and thereout suck they no small advantage.*
11. *Tush, say they, how should God perceive it? Is there knowledge in the Most High?*

12. *Lo, these are the ungodly; these prosper in the world; these have riches in possession.*
13. *Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, said I, and washed my hands in innocency.*
14. *All the day long have I been punished, and chastened every morning.*
15. *Yea, I had almost said even as they; but lo, then should I have condemned the generation of thy children.*
16. *Then thought I to understand this, but it was too hard for me.*
17. *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I the end of these men.*

Because wicked men prosper so well in this world, the people of God conform and apply themselves to do as they do, and frame their lives and manners unto the rule and fashion of such wicked people as prosper. And they suck and draw into their minds the wicked men's opinions and conversation, and so replenish themselves with iniquity, as the thirsty man replenishes himself with water. And when the people see the best part turn unto the manners of the worst, and are as evil or worse than the worst, they muse and think whether there is any God, or knowledge in God, who suffers these abominations. And not only the common people, saith Asaph, stood in a mammering,* whether God took any heed or cared for the world, seeing that wicked men so prospered, and the godlier sort were so vexed; but I myself also, considering these things with myself, fell into such madness and error of judgment, that I thought I had done evil so to apply myself to a virtuous and godly life; seeing I was vexed and turmoiled with continual miseries, and seeing that there was never a day that did not bring its cross and trouble to the servants of God and virtuous people. These things, saith the prophet, fondly and foolishly I spake to myself many times; but when I weighed the thing with more judgment, and considered the matter more deeply with myself, I thought—If I thus judge and speak of God, do I not reprove, reprehend, and condemn the life, conversation, and labours of all godly men, who will not be drawn nor enticed from godly life and the love of virtue by any misfortunes or afflictions in this world? neither do they judge that they have studied and followed

* Hesitating.

godliness in vain, whatsoever trouble hath happened to them in this world. And therefore, when I assayed to compass the cause and verity of these things, the greatness thereof brought me into much fear and anxiety. And further I perceived that I could not come to the knowledge of these things, except the almighty God would reveal and open unto me the mysteries and secrets of his providence and wisdom, that I might see and understand what end and outgoing these wicked men should have, who with the greatest abomination and blasphemy in this life had the greatest felicity and pleasure; and by tarrying in the thoughts and cogitations of this case and matter, at last I found, that these wicked men and women, whose felicity and prosperous estate tormented me, their end was most miserable, full of wretchedness and pain.

Verse 18. *Namely, thou settest them in slippery places, and castest them down, and destroyest them.*

19. *Oh! how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end!*

Doubtless the felicities and pleasures, Lord, that thou gavest to these wicked doers, are slippery and brittle: for so may I well call them, because such as enjoy them, for the most part, so abuse them in this life, that they lose the life everlasting.

Verse 20. *Yea, even as a dream when one awaketh: so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the city.*

These wicked men's felicity vanished, as the dream of him that is awaked; for as the dream for a time seems to be true, and as long as he sleeps he supposes it to be as he dreams; but as the dream passes, the sleep being broken, so does these wicked men's felicity, when they depart out of this life.

Verse 21. *Thus my heart was grieved, and it went through my reins.*

22. *So foolish was I and ignorant, even as it were a beast before thee.*

23. *Nevertheless, I am always by thee: for thou hast holden me by the right hand.*

24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory.*

Asaph saith, When formerly I saw such wicked men as flourished in all felicity and pleasure, cast down headlong

from their places, I was wonderfully troubled: and no marvel; for I was but a fool and an idiot, who perceived not the judgment of the Lord, but as a beast before thee in that respect, O Lord; yet didst thou conduct me, such a fool as I am, to the understanding of thy pleasure, in such difficult and hard causes. And in their pleasures thou showedst me their loss and damnation, and in mine own adversity and trouble showedst me my salvation and perpetual health.

Verse 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon the earth, that I desire in comparison of thee.*

26. *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

When the prophet has weighed God's judgment towards such as with iniquity lived in all pleasure, and perceived that their pains were for ever, and their joys but for a time, he is inflamed with the love of God, and breaks forth into these godly words and sentences: "Who can delight me in heaven but thou, O Lord? Whom shall I love upon the earth; whom shall I reverence and honour but thee? Doubtless, of all things except thee, I pass nothing of, nor set store by. Thee only I embrace, thee only I desire, and thee only I covet and wish for; for thou only art to be beloved, to be honoured, and to be wished for: so that both my soul and my body are ravished with the love of thee; for thou art the strength and foundation of my soul and body; thou art my riches, my treasure, and my everlasting inheritance."

Verse 27. *For lo, they that forsake thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that commit fornication against thee.*

28. *But it is good for me to hold me fast by God, to put my trust in the Lord God.*

And good cause have I, O Lord, to love thee; for they shall perish and be destroyed, as many as love any thing besides thee, and forsake thee: therefore, as I know it is profitable only to prefer thee, O Lord, in all love and favour; so is it right that I, being thus saved by thy mercy, and receiving so many benefits at thy hand, should continually with laud and praise celebrate and magnify the marvellous works of thy goodness and providence.

The end of the paraphrase or plain explanation.

THE PRINCIPAL PARTS OF PSALM LXXIII.

Verse 1. *Truly God is loving to Israel, &c.*

The first part is contained in the first verse, and it declares that God loves the good, although he punishes them.

Verse 2. *My feet were almost gone, &c.*

The second part is contained in the second verse, and it declares how weak and frail a thing the nature of man is, and upon how small an occasion it is in danger to fall from God.

Verse 3—9. *I was grieved at the wicked, &c.*

The third part is contained in the seven verses that follow, which show wherein the felicity of wicked men consists, that good men are so sore grieved at.

Verse 10—12. *Therefore fall the people unto them, &c.*

The fourth part is contained in the three verses next ensuing; and it declares how frail, brittle, and weak a thing man is, who, for every trifle, turns and withdraws himself from God.

Verse 13, 14. *Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, &c.*

The fifth part is contained in the two verses next following; and it declares how soon men repent their well-doings.

Verse 15. *Yea, and I had almost said even as they, &c.*

The sixth part is contained in the verse next following; and it declares how great a danger it is to judge hastily of God, or of God's people, without the word of God.

Verse 16—22. *Then thought I to understand this, but it was too hard for me, &c.*

The seventh part is contained in the seven verses next following; and it declares that man's reason is but ignorant and brutish in considering God's works, until it is illuminated by God and his word; and then is clearly shown, how vain all things are that wicked men possess in this world.

Verse 23—28. *Nevertheless I am alway by thee: for thou hast holden me by my right hand, &c.*

The eighth part is contained in the six verses to the end of the psalm; and it declares a wonderful and unspeakable

consolation. For although we are grievously tempted, yet we are not forsaken of God, but are preserved and lifted up, when otherwise we should fall. And in this part, in setting forth the multitude and number of God's consolations, he draws near the end of the psalm, and concludes it with this text, "I will set forth thy works." Wherewith he declares that he will be thankful unto God for his great gifts and mercy.

The end of the parts and chief matters in the psalm.

WHAT THINGS ARE TO BE MARKED OUT OF THESE PARTS AND MATTERS OF THE PSALM.

Out of

THE FIRST PART

are many things to be noted.

Verse 1. *Truly God is loving to Israel, &c.*

First, that the nature and condition of God, as he hath prepared for men a place of joy permanent and everlasting, is not to reward such as are his, and ordained to the life to come, with so slender and small a recompense in the blood of his Son Jesus Christ, as the worldly and transitory things of this world; (Matt. vi. Coloss. iii. 1 Cor. xv. Matt. xxv. Sol. Song, iv.) but with riches and treasures that shall not corrupt nor be eaten with vermin, nor yet taken from us by thieves. (John xvii.) As St. Paul saith, "He hath made us to sit with him in the glory of heaven." (Ephes. ii.) And as Christ said unto Peter, who became a beggar with the rest of the apostles in this world, for Christ's sake: "Ye shall sit upon the twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. xix.)

We must therefore note out of this place of the prophet's psalm, that God, although he whip and scourge us, as we have most worthily deserved, yet he loves us, and will not take his mercy from us, but will leave beating of us, and burn the rod; and then in Christ reward us with everlasting life. In any case, therefore, we must well assure ourselves in the days of God's punishments, that the end of his crosses and afflictions is the beginning of everlasting joys. For he receives none but such as he first corrects and chastens. (Rom. viii. Luke xxii. Psalm cxix. Rev. v. vii. xxii. Isaiah liv. Hos. i. Heb. xii.)

The second instruction in this part, is to be persuaded that God does not punish without just cause, nor that he delights in punishing his people, as the wicked Pharaoh, Nimrod, Saul, and Julian the apostate, said. And when he had drowned all the world with water for sin, the wicked people judged that God had punished from a partial and choleric passion in his fury, without just matter and cause. (Isa. li. Rom. iii. Exod. xiv. Gen. x. 1 Sam. xxviii.) Therefore they went about, in contempt of God, to build a tower so high that God should never be able to wreak his wrath upon them again. So did Pharaoh; he asked what God that should be, that could plague him and his realm? (Exod. v.) and in the time of his punishment he railed and spake most irreverently. Wicked Saul, also, when God for his disobedience punished him, he, in despite of God, sought remedy to withstand the punishments of God by witchcraft and necromancy. (1 Sam. xxviii.) And Julian the emperor, when Christ gave him his death-wound in the wars, took a handful of his own blood, and hurled it in despite of Christ into the air, and said, "Thou hast overcome, thou Galilean:" for in mockery he called Christ and christian men Galileans. Wherefore, in any case, this beginning of the psalm is to be marked, and used in the time of all men's punishments, and to say with heart and mouth unto the heavenly Father, whatsoever he layeth upon us, "Truly God is loving unto me," &c. And so does king David cry out, when God was most severe and busy in punishing both him and his people, saying, "Thou art just, Lord, and right: and just is thy judgment." (Psalm cxix.) So did the emperor Mauritius say, when his wife and children were killed before his face, "Thou art just, Lord, and thy judgments are righteous."

Job likewise was of the same mind: although his wife and kinsfolk provoked him to speak impatiently and irreverently of God; yet he said, that he and all his were the Lord's, and that if he had received them from him, why should not he be contented, that God should have them again at his pleasure? (Job i. ii.)

These two notes are to be marked and used, whatsoever happens. First, that God purposes to bestow heavenly pleasures and treasures upon his people; and therefore he will not reward them with the trash and wicked mammon of this life and transitory vale of misery. The second, when he punishes his in this world, it is of love; and that

the person afflicted must both take it so, and also say with Asaph, "Truly God is loving unto Israel;" that is to say, to him that professes his religion. (John xvi. Gal. v. Col. i. 1 Thes. i. Heb. xii. James i. 1 John i.)

A third note is to mark that God is known and felt, in the time of punishment and persecution, to be loving, only by such as are of a clean heart. (Psalm cxix. Deut. iv. 2 Sam. xxii. Neh. ix. Psalm xviii. xci. cxviii. Rom. v. xii. 1 Cor. iv. 2 Cor. i.) Whereof we learn, that all men who bear the name of Israelites and of the christian religion, judge neither reverently nor yet patiently of God's punishments, except such christian men as are of clean hearts. Out of this place we may learn the cause why, in this troublesome time, so many wax weary and fall from the truth of God's word, while God is punishing us that have been unthankful unto him, and did not live according to his word—the Lord forgive us. Doubtless, now they mislike, and start back; no, not start back, but openly, in the face of God's enemies, swear as Peter did, (God send them Peter's repentance!) that they never cared a jot for God's word. And all is, because they are not, nor ever were, of a clean heart; that is to say, persuaded in their hearts, that God's holy word is the only truth, what punishment soever God lay upon them that profess it. God give us this clean heart, that we may unfeignedly say, "Doubtless, the Lord is loving unto his word, and to them that profess it, although he lay thousands of crosses upon them in this world."

Out of this place we are admonished, dearly beloved, to beware of one of the greatest and most abominable evils that can be done against God; that is to say, witchcraft, and calculation by astrology, and such like. When we see the heavens rain, the clouds wholly bent to storms and tempests; the winds roaring and in such rage, as though all should go asunder; also thunder and lightnings which men wonder at; and under all these plagues, tempests, and foul weather, the young springing corn, the roots of sweet herbs, the little withered grass, lie buried and covered under weather and storms, frost and snow, while God suffers winter, and makes cold to continue. Were it not a heinous offence to say and divine from these stormy and winterly tempests, that summer should not be green, that parched blades of grain should not come again to corn in the harvest; that frost-bitten and buried roots

should not at the spring bring forth sweet and pleasant flowers; that trees shaken and wind-torn by tempests should not, in the calm coming of the summer, bud forth their leaves? What witch and cursed man would thus judge of earthly things, that have their times of fading and losing of all beauty for the sin of man? If it be abomination to condemn and curse the summer to come, for the bitterness and storms of winter; because summer's fruits and the spring's beauty are stained and defiled with winter's barrenness and dim clouds; is it not ten times more abomination for the bitterness and storms of persecution, to condemn and curse the life to come of God's people, because truth's fruits and the resurrection's glory are stained and dishonoured with worldly scarcity, and dimmed by persecution? But as Asaph saith, "All eyes see not these things, but such as are of a clean heart." All men have eyes, for the most part, and all men have hearts, but they are such as the worms of the earth and birds of the air can eat and devour; but he that will live in God, and see these things, must have immortal eyes and an incorruptible heart, which comes by grace in God's Spirit, to see by faith, and honour with reverence, God's doings, as well in the winter and cold storms of persecution, as in the summer of felicity and pleasure; and to remember that all men and women have this life and this world appointed unto them for their winter and season of storms. The summer draws near, and then shall we be fresh, orient, sweet, amiable, pleasant, acceptable, immortal, and blessed, for ever and ever; and no man shall take us from it. We must, therefore, in the mean time, learn out of this verse to say unto God, whether it be winter or summer, pleasure or pain, liberty or imprisonment, life or death, "Truly God is loving to Israel, even unto such as be of a clean heart."

Out of

THE SECOND PART

are divers things also to be noted.

Verse 2. *My feet were almost gone, &c.*

First, the prophet notes, how wretched and miserable man is, and how soon inclined to do evil. He saith, that

he was ready to have slipped from God, even with the beholding of God's own works, when he saw God give unto the wicked felicity and prosperity; which things are only God's riches, to give to whom he will. Although he bestowed none of his upon the wicked, yet was he offended that God should bestow his own where he pleased. The same occasion the workmen in the vineyard took to murmur against God; as it is in the gospel of St. Matthew, (chap. xx.) So that we are naturally given to this, that God gives always too much unto others, and too little unto us; yea, although he would give us all the world, and yet keep any one thing for himself, even his very Godhead, in case he will not give also that unto us, we are ready to bid him farewell. And in case he will not also give us as much as is in him, such is our nature, that we will by some means or other seek to have it. As we may see, when he had made Adam, and given him both knowledge and power above all other creatures made for his use, because he was not made God altogether, he fell most heinously from God; and slipped not only in his feet, but also in soul and body, to his utter ruin and destruction, and of us all that come of him. (Gen. iii.) For this is our condition—let God give us ever so much, we think it too little, except we have a singular grace to consider it aright; and let us surrender unto God ever so little homage or service, we think it all too much. Such is our cursed nature and first birth, to be ready to slip from God upon the lightest occasion of the world; yea, when God does other men good, and us no harm. But this nature we have of the devil, our forefather, to disdain and malign at other men's profit and preferment, as he did. (Gen. iii.) For when God made Adam, and put him in paradise, the devil never rested envying Adam's prosperity, until he had brought him to the loss of all together, and quite to fall from the Lord. (John viii.) This doctrine, therefore, touching the brittleness and frailness of man's nature, is to be marked; lest that, whereas the prophet said, "My feet were almost gone," we slide and fall altogether from God.

There is also to be noted, that the prophet said, he was almost gone, and not altogether. Here is the presence, providence, strength, safeguard, and keeping of man by almighty God, marvellously set forth. That although we are tempted and brought even to the very point, to perpetrate and do all mischief, yet he stays us, and keeps us,

that the temptation shall not quite overcome us. And so St. Paul saith of God's providence and present help, that he will not suffer us to be tempted further than we shall be able to bear; and many times when we are brought into the greatest danger and peril both of body and soul, before we fall and are overcome, the Lord preserves us and prevents the evil. As when Abraham went into Egypt, and perceived that the Egyptians would put him in danger for his wife Sarah, for she was a fair woman, he desired her to say, she was his sister; and by that means thought to save himself from danger, and to win favour at the Egyptians' hands. (Gen. xx.) The chastity of this godly matron, Sarah the wife of Abraham, came into such extreme peril, that neither Abraham nor she knew how to stand fast in the state and chaste condition of matrimony; for she was taken to the king to be his wife. But lest the woman should have fallen, and her feet slipped, the Lord rebuked the king, and told him that Sarah was another man's wife, and unlawful for him; and so, by his merciful defence and goodness, kept all parts from falling in that respect....*

The like you may see also in the remarkable history of Esther, (chap. iv.), where the very rock and chief stay of the Jew's health,† Mordecai, made suit to the queen for Ahasuerus's pardon for the life of the Jews, when sentence and judgment of death were passed against them. So that if faith in the promises of God had not stayed him, he had slipped and fallen down, to see all things against him and his countrymen. But before men utterly fall, the Lord is with them, and preserves them with his mercy; as David said, "When my feet were moved, thy mercy, O Lord, stayed me." (Psalm xciv.)

The third thing to be noted of these words, is the manner of the prophet's speaking, which must be marked and understood, or else the reader or hearer of the psalms shall take no profit.

"My feet were almost gone, and my treadings had well nigh slipped."

By the 'feet' he understandeth the mind; and by the 'treadings well nigh slipped,' he understands the judgment and wisdom of the mind. As foul and slippery ways are dangerous for the feet, so are the works of God to the

* The author then refers to Judith. † Welfare, preservation.

mind that is not illuminated with the light of God's word; and as the slipping and running away of the feet causes the whole body to fall, even so the ignorance of the mind causes both body and soul to fall, and grievously to misjudge the works of God: and as the fall of the body defiles it with mire and dirt, even so the fall of the mind defiles both body and soul with impatience and envious indignation at God's works.

So that the prophet saith by these words, "My feet were almost gone, and my treadings had well nigh slipped:" my mind was so troubled to see God suffer the evil to be in such prosperity, and the good in such adversity, that my judgment almost slipped from right thoughts of thee, O Lord; and scarcely I avoided most heinous sin towards thee, in controlling of thy most wise and just doings.

If we marked the pith and wisdom of the scripture, we should see many things more in ourselves than we do, and doubtless should grow to an excellency in wisdom, and find out what evils we are most inclined unto. Amongst all others, hatred and indignation at other men's prosperity is not the least, nor the least frequent; and, indeed, the father of sin, the devil, hath that in him. First, he disdained God and his felicity, but he won nothing thereby but everlasting pains. Then he envied man and his felicity, (Gen. iii.) yet the wicked spirit gained nothing to himself but double damnation and loss of us all. And this seed of the devil descended into our nature, as we may see, and made Cain to kill Abel, his brother; made Ishmael to persecute Isaac—Esau, Jacob—Dathan and Abiram, Moses and Aaron—Aaron and Miriam his sister, Moses—Jacob's children, Joseph—Saul, David—Herod and the pharisees, Christ, and John the baptist, the ten apostles, John and James, Peter and St. John the evangelist; (Gen. iv. xxi. xxvii. Num. xvi. xii. Gen. xxxviii. 1 Sam. xix. Matt. xiv. xx.), and the members of the devil and antichrist in this our time to persecute the members of Christ. So that they are not only almost fallen, but also, (the Lord help them and us all!) altogether slidden to envy and indignation, and likewise to violent oppression of God's holy word. But let us not slip nor fall into indignation, that they prosper, and we are afflicted; but say in the midst of these oppressions of the good, and prosperity of the evil, "Truly God is loving unto Israel;" and let us pray also for their amendment.

THE THIRD PART.

Verse 3. *And why? I was grieved at the wicked, &c.*

Herein is shown what the felicity of the wicked is, and wherein it consists; that the godly are troubled in all things, when they flourish and are in honour; and the poor members of Christ are persecuted and without all honour, and accounted worms rather than men; yea, the dogs and brute beasts of the enemies are in more estimation than the poor believers in Christ. (Psalm xxii.)

Out of this part is to be noted, first, a great fault and oversight in the people of God, for lack of judgment and true knowledge; wherein truth and real felicity indeed consist: the lack of which knowledge makes men both impatient and ignorant judges of God's holy works. The prophet therefore herein amends his own and our ignorance, and wills us to know perfectly wherein felicity and happiness rest. The christian must understand and assure himself, that the felicity and everlasting beatitude of men are wrought by quietness of conscience and innocence of life: of which two parts and virtues, in this tract I will speak more hereafter, as well what they are, and what are the causes of them, as what is the effect of them. I will assure you, if we know not these things well, our religion will but a while be permanent and true unto God.

To enter therefore into the knowledge of the matter, wherein the beatitude and felicity of man consist, it is requisite to cast some clouds and darkness upon those worldly things which wicked men possess, and whereby godly men think them to be happy: as the sun at its rising and passing over the earth, hides and covers the globe and sphere of the moon, and darkens also the light and clearness of the stars; even so the tranquillity of conscience, and the brightness of faith and charity that dwell in the heart of the faithful, darken and hide all things that seem beautiful and voluptuous to the world and carnal lusts of man. And he that has a testimony at home in his own conscience, that he is in the favour of God, will not greatly care for other men's judgments, whether they save or damn, laud or dispraise; nor yet greatly sorrow, although he lack such notes of riches and glory, as worldly men judge and know felicity by. For he that surely knows wherein felicity consists, will not take the worldly

opinion of men for his record, nor for his reward; neither will he greatly fear for any damnation or punishment that the world can annex and join unto his life, for this mortal time. It is therefore christianity to know, that felicity and beatitude rest in the riches of the mind, by God's grace, wrought by the Holy Ghost, for the merits of Christ.

There was amongst the philosophers a great diversity of opinion wherein felicity and beatitude should consist. Some said, it rested in a man being continually void and free from anguish and sorrow. Others said, it consisted in the knowledge of things. Some said, in pleasure and voluptuousness. Aristotle, Theophrastus, and such others as were of the sect of the peripatetics, held, that a blessed and fortunate life consisted in honesty; and said, that the same might be consistent with the voluptuous pleasures of the body, and with external riches, honour, and felicity. But both these opinions, and all the rest, are confuted by our Saviour Christ, and his holy word. He saith, "This is life everlasting, that men know thee, O Father, the only and true God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." (John xvii.) And in another place he saith, "Every one that forsaketh house, brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, or possessions, for my name, shall receive an hundred fold, and possess life everlasting." (Matt. xix.)

By these places we know, that beatitude and felicity consist in knowledge and working of God's will, which are the causes of quietness of conscience and innocency of life: wherein felicity consists, as I said before. The right knowledge of God brings faith in Christ. Faith in Christ brings tranquillity of conscience. Tranquillity of conscience, by faith worketh charity and love, to do and work the will of our heavenly Father. This you may see also in the book of Psalms, that felicity and bliss rest not in those trifling things that glitter to the eye, wherewith the prophet was so sorely offended; but in knowledge and working of God's will. "Blessed is the man whom thou teachest, Lord, and whom thou instructest in thy law." (Psalm xciv.) And in another psalm he saith, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and desireth to work his will." (Psalm cxii.) In these psalms, if you read them with judgment, and prayer to God, you shall find knowledge and consolation, far above the common sort of such as read and use them in the churches now, to

the dishonour of God, and to the destruction of their own souls.

And in this matter of felicity and beatitude of man and woman in this life, I would have you judge by the scripture of God, or else you shall be deceived, what it is, wherein it consists, and what it works; for only the word of God teaches and shows it, and nothing but it: the scripture of God plainly declares, that nothing can be profitable which is not honest and virtuous. And virtue is blessed and true felicity, in what condition or state soever it be; neither can it be increased with any external or bodily goods or honour; neither can it be diminished with any adversities or troubles. And nothing can be blessed but that which is free from iniquity, full of honesty and the grace of God; as you may see in the book of Psalms, where this matter is plainly set forth. "Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of scorners; but his delight was in the law of God," &c. (Psalm i.) And in another psalm is said, "Blessed are they that be clean of life, and walk in the law of God," (Psalm cxix.)

Out of these places we learn, that knowledge and innocence of life work felicity and beatitude. We must therefore beware, that we judge not felicity to be in the inconstant and uncertain riches of the world; but we must contemn them, and also beware that we fear not the trouble which may happen to such virtues wherein felicity does stand. And we must understand also, that although these virtues, wherein felicity consists, and such as are friends of God, are afflicted and troubled; yet that neither the felicity, nor the person in whom it dwells, is any thing the worse for troubles and adversities before God, but rather the better. As you may see by the word of God, that saith, "Blessed are ye when men speak evil of you, and persecute you, and speak all evil against you, for righteousness sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven. So did they persecute the prophets before you." (Matt. v. x.) And in another place it is said, "He that will come after me, let him deny himself, and take his cross and follow me." (Matt. xvi.) The psalm, therefore, in this part, amends the judgment of weak and wavering christian men, that are offended with the prosperity of the wicked, because they do not know, nor mark by God's word, wherein felicity consists, and

that it remains in such virtues as are not diminished, nor drowned in the adversities of this world, whatsoever dangers happen. When was Moses stronger than when he saw on the one side the mountains of Egypt, and on the other side Pharaoh and his army, and before him the Red Sea, and in the midst of these enemies, he and his people standing like sheep ready to be slain by the wolves? (Exod. xiv.) He was never more strong, nor in this life more blessed, than at that time. Daniel was never better than amongst the lions. (Dan. vi.) We must, therefore, know that the virtues wherein felicity consists are not diminished by sorrow and trouble, nor anything increased by the voluptuous pleasures and brittle honours of this world: as St. Paul most godly sets forth in his epistle to the Philippians: "The things that I thought profit and gains, for Christ's sake I esteem as hurt and damage; for whose love I esteem all things as nothing, so that I may win Christ." (Phil. iii. Heb. xi.) And Moses esteemed the treasures of Egypt hurtful, and preferred them not before the reproaches and rebukes of the Lord: neither thought he himself rich nor blessed with the riches of Egypt, nor cursed when he was in need and lacked them. Elias the prophet, if he had considered his need and danger, (1 Kings xvii.) might have accounted himself very miserable and unhappy; but because he knew it was appointed him of God, he complained not of God's doings; for he was as well contented to have bread from God by the raven in the morning, and water at night from the fountain, as though he had possessed all the world; and he was not the less blessed, although he was poor; but rather more blessed, because he was rich toward God.

Read the gospel of St. Matthew, and see the practice of this felicity. (chap. xvii.) Moses that was so destitute of all worldly help, and Elias void of all worldly consolation, talked with Christ on the mount of Tabor; where Peter would have tarried with all his heart, although he knew both Christ, and those that he talked with, in the estimation of this world, were accounted the most unhappy and miserable of all men; yet he saw that transitory honours, riches, and felicity, help nothing to the life everlasting. As Christ plainly teaches in St. Luke, "Blessed are the poor; for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness; for they shall be satisfied. Blessed be ye that now weep;

for ye shall laugh." (Luke vi.) Therefore the poverty, misery, and affliction that the prophet was in, when he spake this psalm and most godly hymn, hindered nothing at all his felicity, and blessing of God; but rather furthered it, if he had known wherein truly and verily felicity had consisted; as you may see hereafter, how he came to the knowledge of it.

Another thing is to be noted out of these seven verses, containing the third part of the psalm; that such treasures, riches, and honours, as men set most by in this world, are rather, unto men that have not grace, hindrances and impediments to everlasting felicity, and to the attainment of virtue in this life, than furtherers. (1 Tim. vi.) As the scripture saith: "Woe be unto you, rich men, which have your consolation: woe be unto you that are now full, for ye shall hunger. And such as laugh shall weep." (Luke vi.) Ahab the wicked king, not contented with his kingdom, would take Naboth's vineyard from him; (1 Kings xxi.) but it had been better for him, that he had been a swineherd; for his lands and riches being abused, made him kill an innocent man, his true subject. Plentifulness of God's gifts abused, brings contempt of God and man: as you may see how Nebuchadnezzar, in wealth and riches, despised the living God, and came to feed with brutes. (Dan. iv.) The children of Israel, when they had filled themselves with gifts, were not thankful, but unthankful; and fell from unthankfulness to idolatry, and all abomination. (Exod. xxxii.) And as men contemn God in prosperity, so do they also their neighbours: as you may see by this part of the psalm, where the prophet saith, "Their eyes swell for fatness;" that is, their riches and honour puff them up into such pride, that they contemn and despise all men.

The third thing to be noted is, that all things which the felicity and joys of wicked men consist in, are but worldly and transitory things, and as uncertain as man is himself; which is to be marked; (Deut. xi. Psalm xcii. Isa. xl. Matt. vi. 1 Pet. i.) because no man can be happy or blessed by any such fading and inconstant things. Neither can any man come to the beatitude of permanent joys, by such things as God gives indifferently as well to the bad as to the good, and to the vicious as to the virtuous. As Solomon, in the book of the Preacher, marvellously sets forth, and matches equally the good with the bad, in such things

as happen under the sun: "The good and the bad," saith he, "are rich and poor, in trouble and in prosperity, they have friends and foes, are merry and sorry, live and die all alike." (Eccles. iii. iv. v.) But neither the things that bring them to life everlasting, nor yet life everlasting itself are like these; for there is nothing that leadeth to everlasting life but the knowledge and fear of God, and the doing of his blessed will; which virtues come not by nature, but by grace. As Solomon declared, when he prayed so earnestly to have wisdom and understanding from God. (1 Kings iii.)

And as these virtues come not from nature, even so they are not the riches of all men, but of virtuous and godly men only. And as they dwell and inhabit only in such as fear God; so they only conduct and lead such as are godly (and none other) to eternal life. This differs as far and as much from the wicked's eternal life, as joy differs from sorrow, ease from pain, pleasant consolation from fiery flames, love from hatred, God from the devil, and heaven from hell; for those riches wherewith the ungodly are endued in this life, are not the things that can make any man blessed or cursed before God. Therefore, they are no more to be cared for, than need is; to have them, if God will; if not, to lack them: to have them with God's grace well to use them; or else to pray to lack them, lest they abuse us. Better it were to have too little in the world with God's favour, than too much with his displeasure. (1 Tim. vi.) If we have meat, drink, and clothes, let us be contented with it, as with sufficient things to pass this life. If any more than these come, take heed they make us not swell in pride, and take from us the remembrance and service of God. O that godly eyes would look upon this psalm, and especially upon this part of it, that declares wherein the glory, honour, and felicity of wicked men consist—then I know these eyes shall hardly escape tears and weeping, to see and hear a wicked and cursed creature of God, pampered with such a sort of vain fleetings, that when he would most gladly flee from sorrow, the least are able to carry him away. (Luke xii.)

Mark the wicked man's riches, and you shall perceive that God has given him no more than he has unto the clay, mould, and stony earth; wherein lie both gold and precious stones. (Matt. vi.) His beauty and amiableness of vesture and apparel is not like the rose of the garden,

nor the lily of the field; his strength is much inferior to brute beasts; his wisdom less than the horse or mule, that use meats and drinks enough for necessity, and not too much out of sensuality. If lack and need oppress them, they wait patiently until order provide for them; but if the wicked lack, he bears it not with patience, nor seeks to obtain enough, by truth. The courageous horse fiercely in fight contemns death; and the meek swan, feeling life to pass away, with sweet tunes welcomes death, and strives not, but willingly is contented to surrender that which cannot be kept by force. But what does the rich wicked man? Even as the wise man saith: "O death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to such as have confidence in their riches!" O Lord! what a charnel-house of stinking carrion is this body and life of wicked man puffed up with riches! inferior, with all that ever he has, to the birds of the air, the beasts of the fields, and unto the barren clay that he was made of; and the soul itself, within that wicked body is cursed of God, and ordained to eternal pains.

Who is he that can read or behold the state and honour of man, in whom is not mentioned one virtue to dwell, without sorrow and heaviness? What a cursed nature is man made of, that can see another thus pampered up with God's displeasure, and does not rather bewail and mourn to see his brother lost by these riches, and cast away, than envy or disdain at his person? Oh! woe befall them, that fall into this sin of ours, that thus rather with malice and disdain envy the miseries and curses of God upon others, than charitably go about to amend them, or ruthfully to bewail them! Read, my dearly beloved in the Lord, this place, and mark well the wicked men, and learn to pray for them, as may God give us all grace to do.

THE FOURTH PART.

Verse 10. *Therefore fall the people unto them, &c.*

Out of this part the first thing to be noted is, how dangerous it is to be continually assaulted with temptation; and that the end of it, for the most part, is the conquest and overthrow of as many as are assaulted. As we may see by

the examples of our forefathers, temptation not resisted at the beginning, prevailed against our innocent parents Adam and Eve in paradise; against Cain in murder; against Aaron and the people in idolatry; against Nimrod in pride; against David in adultery; against Judas in avarice; against Aaron and Miriam his sister in envy; against Esau in gluttony; against Pharaoh in pride; against Herod in hypocrisy; against the pharisees in blindness and obstinacy of mind; against the Jews in the slander of Christ's death; against the Gentiles in ignorance of God's word. (Gen. iii. iv. xxv. Exod. xxxii. 2 Sam. xi. Matt. xxvi. Numb. xii. Gen. xxv. Exod. iii. Matt. xiv. John vii. v—ix. 1 Cor. i. Rom. i.) Against the most part of christians now-a-days in cowardice and fear; and against all the world, in looking more how to profit itself, than to serve and fear God. The prophet said before, he was almost gone to see the wicked so prosper; but he saith now, that the people fall utterly unto them, and learn both the wicked opinions and wicked life of the wicked.

The second is, that the people fall not into the wicked blasphemy of iniquity one by one, but by clusters, in great numbers. Wherein is much to be noted, that so few so hardly turn to God, and so many so quickly turn to abomination. But as Christ said, "The way to heaven is narrow and strait, and few enter; and the way to hell is broad and plain, and many enter in it." (Matt. vii.)

THE FIFTH PART.

Verse 13. *Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, &c.*

Out of it we are admonished, that our nature is soon offended with troubles for the glory of God. And even as we are unquiet with the troubles, so we are inconstant and unstable in the knowledge and truth that we suffer trouble for; and begin to repent, that ever we began to favour or embrace the truth; and wish, also, that we had used ourselves as other men did; and then had suffered with other men the common lot and fortune of the world, and not thus have been given to a singular knowledge of God's word, which brings with it a singular hatred and punishment in this world. (Jer. xx.) Such is our nature, if we are by afflictions and troubles, but for a day's space,

made like unto Christ, we think it too long; but if we are by sin, for all our lifetime, made like unto the devil, we think the time too short, and wish to live longer, because we would longer work and delight in sin and abomination. Great and heinous is our offence in this respect: for a little time spent in well-doing, we judge too long; and all time spent in evil-doing, we judge too short. All labours and pains are too little, if they are bestowed in worldly things; but if they are appointed to heavenly things, be they ever so few and slender, we think them too much.

There is not sea or land, with all the perils in them, but men dare adventure both their goods and their lives, to win increase of worldly goods; but to win towards God and godliness, scarcely one of a great many will labour or take pains to gain it, even without danger. So the prophet says in this place, that "he had cleansed his heart in vain;" because he saw cleanliness* and virtue persecuted, and filth† with iniquity honoured and exalted. Christ, in the gospel of St. John, perceiving that when virtue and well-doing should be troubled, men should wax weary of well-doing and virtue, said unto his disciples, "Remember when they come, that I spake of them, and warned you before." (John xvi.)

THE SIXTH PART.

Verse 15. *Yea, and I had almost said even as they, &c.*

Out of it we learn, that no man should judge of God's works, nor God's people, but by the word of God. In this respect we many times grievously offend the almighty God. For when the world condemns God's word, then the most part of men do the same. If the world say it is true, we say so too. If the world say it is untrue, we say it is untrue; and if the world condemn it, we condemn it also: likewise, if the world account them cursed and damned that are persecuted for God's sake, and for the testimony of his name, we do so too. Yea, and moreover, if the world slander and lie upon poor men and poor women, that suffer for God's sake, we speak as they do, and sometimes persecute also the good with them. This is an horrible thing, to reprove after such a carnal and

* Holiness. † Wickedness.

worldly sort, God, and all his blessed people, which will be at length, doubtless, a just condemnation of the world.

THE SEVENTH PART.

Verse 16. *Then thought I to understand this, but it was too hard for me, &c.*

We learn out of this part, that until reason be amended and removed from her natural blindness, it can do no other than condemn both God and God's people. And no marvel; for the prophet in the eighty-third psalm, and also in the thirty-first psalm, has these words: "They have consulted against thy hidden people;" as though he had said, The merciful Father of heaven keeps the godly people in most sure and strong defence and protection; but this kind of protection is hid from the eyes of man's reason. So that it seems many times, as if God had the least care for the godly, and cared more for the wicked than for them. Yet, howsoever the world judges, God sleepeth not. Further, how blessed the state and life of the godly is, and how cursed the life and state of the wicked is, only the virtuous and godly do perceive. Therefore the scripture calls those that are godly and virtuous, the hidden of God. Moreover, the godly perceive, that all the vanity of worldly things, which are the treasures of the wicked, and the permanent state and condition of heavenly things, which are the treasures of the godly, are only seen of such as enter into the holy sanctuary and secret treasures of God's most holy word, without which, worldly things seem to be riches, and heavenly things poverty; wicked men to be blessed, and godly men cursed; falsehood to be truth, and truth falsehood; death to be life, and life death.

THE EIGHTH PART.

Verse 23. *Nevertheless, I am alway by thee, for thou hast holden me always by my right hand.*

The prophet out of this part declares that which St. Paul writes to the Romans: (chap. viii.) "If God be with

us, who can be against us? If he love us, who is he that can separate us from his love, who spared not his only Son for our redemption, but gave him for us unto the death? Therefore, there is neither life nor death, things present nor things to come, that can separate us from him."

Unto this place is referred all the deliverance from trouble and danger that God used from the beginning of the world unto our time. And when we understand and know God's mercy towards ourselves and others, we must give ourselves wholly to laud and praise his holy name, and be thankful; for there is nothing more unnatural in man, than forgetfulness of God's great and innumerable gifts towards us. To whom be all honour and praise, world without end. Amen.

AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

SEVENTY-SEVENTH PSALM.

The Argument.

When Asaph, being a man appointed to the service and teaching of God's word unto the people, perceived that such as were under his care and charge were many times troubled and brought into great heaviness, for the fear and dread they had conceived of God's most just wrath and strict punishment for sin, and transgression of his holy laws, and in himself felt especially the burden of God's displeasure against sin to be intolerable—he received from the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of consolation, what was the best remedy and help for every troubled conscience, to appease and quiet the poor spirit of man, which knows and feels not only that God is justly angry for sin, but, also, will strictly punish the iniquity and abomination of the same. And when he had himself learned from God, how a troubled and desperate conscience might be quieted, he spake to such as were alive and with him, and wrote it to all such as should come after him until the world's end, that troubled sinners might see their sins forgiven in the mercy of God, and they themselves accepted, as God's most dear children, into eternal friendship and endless joys of salvation.

THE PARTS OF THE PSALM.

I. In whom a man should put his trust, and to whom he should resort in the days of sickness, troubles, and adversity.

II. How a man should use himself towards him in whom he putteth his trust in the time of trouble.
III. What great and perilous dangers the man that is troubled shall suffer in the time of his trouble.
IV. How a man taketh consolation in the time of his trouble.

THE TWO FIRST VERSES OF THE PSALM, CONTAIN THE TWO FIRST PARTS.

1. *I will cry unto God with my voice: even unto God will I cry with my voice, and he shall hearken unto me.*
2. *In the time of my trouble I sought the Lord: my hand I held up all night, and it was not weary: my soul refused comfort.*

THE FIRST PART.

IN WHOM A MAN SHOULD PUT HIS TRUST, AND TO WHOM HE SHOULD RESORT IN THE DAYS OF SICKNESS, TROUBLES, AND ADVERSITY.

Verse 1. *I will cry unto God with my voice: even unto God will I cry with my voice, and he shall hearken unto me.*

FIRST out of this text it is to be noted, that God only is to be trusted unto in the days of trouble, as our Saviour Christ exhorted all people, in heaviness and anguish of body and soul, to resort unto him, saying, "Come unto me all ye that be laden and burdened, and I will refresh you." (Matt. xi.) And the same is spoken of God by Isaiah the prophet: "Ye that are athirst, come unto the waters; and ye that have no money, come, and take it freely." (Isaiah lv.) St. John, likewise, when in the midst among troubled and afflicted persons, recites the words of Christ, saying, "If any be dry, let him come to me, and drink." (John vii.) "He that believeth on me," as the scripture saith, "floods of water of life shall flow out of his belly." (Isaiah xii.)

From this knowledge and surety* in the soul of man, that God is, can, and will be an ease and remedy for the troubled conscience, come justice,† peace, and joy of the

* Assurance. † Righteousness.

conscience. (Rom. v. xiv.) Not that any man shall be at present without all fear, trembling, and dread of his sins, and of God's just judgment against sin, but that this fear and trembling shall not come to desperation; neither shall he be more afraid of his sins, than comforted by God's mercy and grace in Christ. Therefore saith our Saviour Christ, "Blessed be they that weep, for they shall be comforted. Blessed be they that hunger and thirst for justice,* for they shall be replenished." (Matt. v.) In that he saith, "Blessed be they that weep," he notes such as do know and feel with sorrow and heaviness of conscience that they are sinners, and the filthiness of their sins makes them sorrowful and heavy-hearted; yet shall they be comforted in Christ. Again, the poor, sensible, feeling, and troubled sinner wishes his sins away, and would gladly have virtue and justice* to rule and do altogether in him what is God's holy will and pleasure. This hunger and thirst, saith Christ, shall be quenched for the merits of his own death and passion; as it shall not fail, if men in their thirst, hunger, persecution, and trouble, do know and use God only for their help and consolation, as this prophet did, and teaches us to do the same in this psalm.

In this first part two sorts of people are condemned. The one is such as plainly despair, and in their troubles neither look for consolation, nor yet believe that there is any consolation to be hoped for in Christ; the other such as seek consolation, but not only at God's hand and power, but at the saints departed, at witches, conjurors, hypocrites, and, also, the works devised and done by man.

The first sort are left comfortless, because they seek no consolation; and the second sort find no comfort, because they seek it where it is not, contrary unto God and his holy word. Happy, therefore, are the troubled, who seek for consolation at God's hands, and no where else. "For he is," as it is written by the prophet Isaiah, "the God alone that doth save, and none but he." (Isaiah xlv.) But there are two manner of impediments that keep the almighty God from the helping and comforting of people that are in trouble. The one is ignorance of God's nature and property towards the afflicted; and the other is fear and dread, since God is most justly angry for sin, lest that in his anger and just punishment he will not be merciful.

From the first impediment, which is ignorance, is

* Righteousness.

sprung into the world horrible blasphemy, that neither seeks help at God's hand, nor yet is thankful unto God for any thing that he gives; but renders all things to such gods and saints as he has devised out of his own imagination, or else has learned, as St. Peter saith, out of the traditions of his elders; (1 Pet. i.) so that ignorance takes away the honour of God, and also the salvation of them that are ignorant. The only remedy against this great impediment is the reading, meditating, hearing, and learning of God's holy word, (2 Pet. i.) which is as a candle-light in a dark place, to keep and preserve a man from danger and peril. And so saith king David, that it is a candle unto his feet, and a light unto his steps. (Psalm cxix.) And in another place of his psalms he saith, "The law of God is so perfect, that it turneth souls unto the Lord. Wherefore it is the part of every man that will be virtuous and godly, to have his desire and cogitations in the law of God both day and night." (Psalm i.) And to preserve the people from this horrible impediment of ignorance, God spake by his prophet Isaiah these words: "My Spirit, which is in thee, and my words, which I put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thy mouth, and from the mouth of thy seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth for evermore." (Isaiah lix.) And in the same prophecy Christ prays the heavenly Father to seal his word in his disciples, whereby the dangerous impediment of man's salvation, which is ignorance, might be avoided. (Isaiah viii.) The same remedy against ignorance, almighty God also commands, by Moses in Deut. (chap. vi.) and by St. Paul to the Ephesians, (chap. vi.) whereas the fathers and the mothers are not bound themselves alone to know the law of God, but also bound to teach it to their children, that by ignorance they offend not God.

From the second impediment, which is fear and dread of God's justice, comes trembling and terror of the conscience, and many times, also, the extremest evil of all evils, desperation, that never looks who can help, nor yet trusts to find any help. But of these fruits of terror and fear, and also of their remedies how they may be cured and helped, it shall be showed hereafter in the psalm, wherein both terror of conscience and quietnesss of the same are marvellously and divinely set forth. Only until I come to these points I note, that this fear and terror of conscience in the faithful are the very hunger and thirst that Christ

saith shall be quenched, (Matt. v.) and they that feel them shall be replenished with grace and consolation, as the blessed virgin, the mother of Christ, saith; and they that feel them not, shall depart empty without grace. (Luke i.) And the cause of this terror and fear is the Spirit of God that worketh the knowledge of our sin by preaching, reading, or thinking of God's law, that opens and detects how wretched and sinful we are by nature in the sight of God. (Rom. iii. v. vi. vii. viii.)

THE SECOND PART.

How a Man should use himself towards him, in whom he putteth his Trust in the Time of Trouble.

Verse 2. *In the time of my trouble I sought the Lord: my hand I held up all night, and it was not weary: my soul refused comfort.*

In this part is taught us, both by doctrine and by example, how we should conduct ourselves in the time of trouble. When we know there is no help nor helper but God alone, it is not enough for a man to know that God can help; but, also, we must believe constantly, that he hath as prompt a will to help, as a sufficient power able to help; and then, being assured that he both can and will help, we must call upon him for help, according to his commandment unto us: "Call upon me in the days of trouble," &c. (Psa. l. 15.)

Out of this place we may mark and learn, what an intolerable burden and unspeakable sorrow the terror and fear of sin is, and how grievous is the sight and contemplation of God's displeasure and just judgment against every sinner for his sin and transgression of God's most holy law. The text saith, that the prophet, when he felt the displeasure of God against sin, cried out with a loud voice unto the Lord; whereby we learn, that the conscience of man admonished by the word of God, of the filthiness and abomination of sin, brings all the body into trembling and fear, lest God should rather use justice, and justly punish sin, than mercy, and mercifully forgive sin.

And thus being made thoroughly afraid of sin, the mind

is occupied with sorrowful and heavy cogitations, and the tongue by vehemence of the spirit is brought into clamours and cries. As we may see commonly by examples left unto us in the word of God, that where sin is thoroughly felt in the conscience, the feeling sinner is not only troubled within in spirit, but also outwardly in all the members and parts of his body, as it is to be seen most manifestly in king David.

In what a sea of heaviness was king David in his conscience, when he spake to his own soul: "Why art thou so heavy and sorrowful, O my soul, and why dost thou thus trouble me?" Again: "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?" (Psalm xlii.) And in other psalms we may see into what trembling and outward fear he was brought by the knowledge and feeling of his sin.

In one place he saith, the fear of his sins did not only overlay his conscience, but also crushed and, in a manner, almost broke his bones. (Psalm xxxviii.) And in another place (Psalm vi.) his visage was defaced with weeping tears, and they gushed out of his eyes so abundantly, that he watered, or rather overflowed his bed with them where he lay. Into what horrible cries and wailings he many times fell for fear of sin, this psalm and many others declare. The like horror and fear also of the sight and feeling of sin we see to have been in St. Paul, when he cried out upon himself, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body subject unto death?" (Rom. vii.) And Mary Magdalen, with the sight and feeling of God's displeasure against her sin, made tears and weeping enough to wash the feet of the fountain of mercy, Jesus Christ. But blessed is that conscience alarmed by the law, whose fear, by the sweet promises of the gospel, is turned into mirth; and blessed be those tears and weepings that end in consolation; and happy is that troubled body, whose end is immortality in the resurrection of the just. (Psalm cxxvi. Matt. v. 1 Cor. xv.) Further, as we see here king David, a sinner, for fear of God's judgment, brake out into loud cries for help and preservation: the same anguish and trouble of mind and of body, for fear of God's punishment for sin towards man, was likewise in Christ without sin, who said, "My soul is heavy unto death." (Matt. xxvi.) And in such an agony was his body, that he burst out and sweat both water and blood.

So that of this second part, we learn, first, that such as are truly and unfeignedly brought to a knowledge, feeling, and repentance of their sins, many times have it with great heaviness of mind, terror of conscience, and trouble also of the body; but no sickness or troubles may be compared to the trouble of the conscience, for fear of due and condign punishment for the sin perpetrated and committed against God's laws.

The second doctrine that we are taught out of this second part is, to declare what difference there is between the penitent christian in adversity, and the desperate person that looks for no help, or else the presumptuous person that contemns help.

The afflicted penitent calls unto the Lord, and although he find his burden ever so intolerable, and weep and lament ever so sorely, yet he despairs not, but in adversity he has hope, and is not confounded; as in prosperity he has faith, and yet presumes not. The desperate man feels all troubles and no consolation, is wholly overcome with mistrust, full of incredulity, and wholly void of hope; as Saul, Judas, and others. The contemner of admonition hath hope in prosperity, with all presumption; as Cain and Pharaoh; and in adversity, desperation, with all mistrust and diffidence. The christian afflicted, calls in faith and hope upon the Lord, and is heard: the wicked afflicted calls not upon the Lord, but is wholly rejected and comfortless, by God's most just judgment. The afflicted christian, sees all his sins less than the least mercies of God; the wicked afflicted, sees the least of his sins greater than the greatest mercies of God. The one when in trouble, by faith glorifies the Lord, and by mercy finds salvation: the other when in trouble, by mistrust dishonours the Lord, and by justice finds damnation. The one by troubles, through faith in Christ, is made like unto the Son of God, and cannot be separated from him in eternal life: the other, by troubles, through desperation of Christ, is made like unto Satan, and cannot be separated from him in eternal death. The one, in eternal life, finds everlasting joys: the other, in everlasting death, finds endless pains. Almighty God, therefore, grant us grace in all our troubles and afflictions, penitently and faithfully to call upon him, and to find him merciful unto us his wretched creatures. Amen.

The third thing to be noted in this second part is, that

God's nature and man's differ much one from the other: for man, for the most part, is no more serviceable unto God, nor longer friendly unto man, than God's condition* upon the earth is fortunate and quiet with the world. For if storms arise for God's cause, and troubles happen where quietness formerly had place, the men of the world alter their love, service, and reverence, and will neither make nor meddle, with God nor his cause; no, although ten thousand idols are brought in for one God, as Englishmen have seen in former times. As long as Christ had a king in this realm of his part, and that great livings, gains, friendship, and love of the world rose for God's sake, they dissembled towards his word, and so long as fair words could please God, he lacked none. But now, even such as God did most for, know neither God nor his word, but had rather hear the falsest tradition that ever man brought into the church ten times spoken of, than once hear of Christ's most holy gospel; so that men's natures, for adversity's sake, now are wholly turned from God.

How long the love of man continues towards men, daily experience shows. Within one month, if a man fall into trouble for the most just cause, he that was his friend will not only alter his love from him, but also all the notes and tokens of the same. Whereas, in prosperity, he was assured both of friendly words and friendly works; in adversity he shall find neither words nor works, except words and works of displeasure. In prosperity fair looks and amiable countenances were as common as the cartway; in adversity there shall neither look nor countenance be showed, except it be frowning and bending of brows; yea, and moreover, adversity takes from the dissembling friend all knowledge that ever he had of his afflicted friend, so that the poor afflicted, although he be even under the nose of his feigned friend, and use courtesy and all obeisance, he cannot be known.

O God! blessed be thy name, that withdrawest neither thy knowledge, love, nor yet thy help, from the poor afflicted, but hearest them, and grantest them their godly and honest requests; as here this prophet most godly and comfortably writes of thee; for he saith, "The Lord shall hearken unto me, when I seek him in the time of trouble." And also, the Lord abhors not to be present with the

* Man for the most part is unstable, and followeth religion as the world followeth.

afflicted, be his troubles ever so great: "For I am (saith the Lord) with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and set him in honour," &c. (Psalm xci.)

From this doctrine* we learn two things: the one, that God hates not the troubled man for his troubles, but for his sins. Men do quite the contrary for the most part; for they hate the man for trouble, and not for sin; for let the wickedest man alive have prosperity, and all wicked men will love him for his prosperity's sake. God turns not his favour from man for trouble, but for sin. The world, for troubles' sake, will not know the most dear and honest friend; but let the most wicked that lives by breath have prosperity, and wicked people will not fail to know him with beck and regard, if he come into company; yea, rather than fail, the most wicked man alive shall be narrowly sought out, that wicked men may have acquaintance with him. But he that hath God for his friend, is sure of a Saviour in adversity as well as in prosperity; as the prophet here declares, who can in troubles send ease, and in quietness continue joys for ever. To him, therefore, be all laud and praise, world without end. Amen.

The fourth thing to be noted in this second part, is the continuance of the faithful afflicted in prayer unto God. For the prophet saith, that he lifted up his hands all night, and waxed not weary. Of this continuance in prayer we learn two things: the one, perseverance in prayer; and the other, patient expectation and willing sufferance until God send redress and ease. To the first the scripture exhorts us, that we pray both heartily and continually unto God, not because he is ignorant of our troubles, but because we should thoroughly be brought to understand that there is none can help us out of trouble but he; and also that, by continuance in prayer, we may the better know, and more earnestly repent our sins, which are the cause of our troubles: and that by often remembrance and confession of our iniquity unto God, we may the sooner bring both our souls and bodies into the service and homage of almighty God, whom we have, by sin, most grievously displeased.

The second virtue—patient expectation in troubles, declares that we are much bound unto God, who chastens us in this life, and defers not our punishment to the eternal pains in the world to come. Also it makes the mind

* Instruction.

of men to understand the wisdom of God, and also the foolishness of man, that many times, for lack of patient expectation and thankful sufferance, waxes weary of his cross and punishment, and also murmurs against God, because he helps not when man's wisdom judges most meet to be holpen. But patient expectation prescribes God no time when to help, nor yet means how to help: but saith, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." (Matt. vi.) Also, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst deliver me." (Matt. viii.) As the prophet uses here in this psalm, he called and cried upon the Lord all the night, and attended patiently when God would help, leaning altogether to his blessed will and pleasure, to do or not to do, as best pleased him.

THE THIRD PART.

What great and perilous Dangers the Man that is troubled shall suffer for the Time of his Trouble.

Verse 2. *My soul refused comfort.*

3. *When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God: when my heart is vexed, I will complain. Selah.*
4. *Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so feeble, I cannot speak.*
5. *I have considered the days of old, and the years that be past.*
6. *In the night I called to remembrance my song, and communed with mine own heart; and my spirit searched diligently.*
7. *Will the Lord absent himself for ever? and will he be no more entreated?*
8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And is his promise come utterly to an end for evermore?*
9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? and will he shut up his loving kindness in displeasure?*

Here it appears what terrible and fearful things a man that is in trouble shall suffer and be vexed with; and the first that the prophet mentions is in the end of the second verse, and it is this, "My soul refused comfort."

Of this adversity and anguish of the soul we may learn many things; first, that as long as sin appears not, nor is

felt, the mind of man is quiet, jocund, and pleasant; and the mirth and pleasure of the mind rejoices the body, and makes it lusty and pleasant; not feeling at all the breach of God's commandments, neither at all distressed at sin or evil conversation, but delighting in things that displease God, rather than in any virtue or honesty. (2 Sam. i. Rom. viii. Acts ix.) But when trouble, sickness, or death comes, then most commonly, though men see not the horror of their sins so as to repent, yet they feel the horror thereof to desperation; and that once being felt in the soul, all the joys of the world cannot comfort the troubled person: as Adam, with all the solace of paradise, could not rejoice when his soul felt the abomination of his offence towards God. Cain could never pluck up a merry countenance for the cruel killing of his brother Abel. (Gen. iii. iv.) Peter could not stay his weeping for his denial of Christ, when Christ looked upon him. (Matt. xxvi.) Mary Magdalen could not pull up her head from under the table, for shame of her sin, until Christ had forgiven her: (Luke vii.) nor the poor woman that was taken in adultery, until her offences were pardoned. (John viii.) Neither yet could this prophet's spirit take any consolation, as long as his sins were felt, and not pardoned. Whereof follows this saying,—a small trouble of conscience puts away all joy and mirth of the world. Wherefore it is wisdom, and also the duty of all christian people, to avoid sin and the enmity of God, which alone troubles the conscience; and to put the body to all pains possible, yea, and to death itself, rather than to put the soul in danger towards God; as St. Paul writes to Timothy his disciple, and not without cause. (1 Tim. i.) For as the spirit that contemns God, and feels God's displeasure, for his contempt, cannot take comfort, but is full of anguish and inward heaviness, and in the outward man full of pain and sorrow; (Isaiah lxvi.) so likewise shall the soul in the life to come inwardly feel unspeakable grudgings and sorrows, and outwardly the unquenchable and everlasting fire of hell. (Rev. xiv.) And here is to be noted, that the very elect and dearest friends of Christ are not free from trouble and anguish of mind for the sins they have perpetrated and committed against God. But this is a consolation, that the elect, as they find anxiety and anguish of mind for sin in this life; so in this life the conscience that is troubled is quieted by grace, that it may, after this life, find eternal rest. And it

is a common method and ordinary way, whereby God uses to bring the sinner to acknowledge and repent of his sin; and so from knowledge and repentance to the forgiveness of his sin, to show and set before the conscience of the sinner, his sin; as the example of king David and others declares: "My sin, saith David, is always before me." (Psalm li.) As though he had said, In case I could hide mine iniquity from all the world, yet can I not excuse it before God, nor hide it from mine own conscience. And every man's sins thus open before God, and known and felt in his own conscience, bring the soul into this discomfort and heaviness, that it refuses all consolation and comfort; as Asaph saith marvellously in this second verse of his psalm.

There is to be noted out of this comfortless spirit of Asaph, another most necessary doctrine for every christian, which is this. That there are two discomforts, or two sorts of heaviness, spoken of in the word of God, that are appointed to lead us in the time of this wretched life: as there are in it also shown two manner of consolations. There are two manner of brightness and clearness, and two manner of darkness and obscureness, as it shall appear hereafter in the treatise of this psalm: and because the diversity is not marked, the word of God many times, and in many places and persons doth no good at all.

There is, in the scripture, a discomfort inwardly, and a discomfort outwardly. The inward discomfort is, when the sinful man or woman seeks and suffers the same discomfort in his soul, that the law of God opens and proclaims against him for his sins committed against God and his law: so that, as the law commands: "Repent ye;" (Matt. iii. Mark i.) so the man that is commanded by the law to be sorry and heavy for his sins, is sorry and heavy indeed, by the working of God's Spirit: as we may see in Adam what inward fear and discomfort he had, when he heard the voice of God after the doing of his sin: Cain the like, David the same, with Peter, Paul, and others, in the word of God. (Gen. iii. iv. 2 Sam. xi. Matt. xxvi. Acts ix.)

This discomfort inwardly is felt by all God's elect, that are able to learn and know the nature of God's law, and the damnation and curse of God upon sin; for this is a general commandment to all flesh born and conceived in

sin, " Repent ye." (Matt. iii. Mark i.) It is also many times felt by such as lived and died wickedly, as Saul and Judas, whose spirits, in their discomfort, refused all consolation, and so died without comfort in great anguish and perturbation of mind. (1 Sam. xxxi. Matt. xxvii. Mark xiv.) But this is not general in all wicked and damned persons; for many times they feel no discomfort nor heaviness of spirit inwardly in this world; but God, of his unspeakable wisdom and justice, makes them, for their sins, to go to hell alive, and in security of conscience: as Pharaoh, whilst he followed the Israelites in persecution into the Red Sea, suddenly was drowned. (Exod. xiv.) Also Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, whilst they were doing their sacrifices, God killed them by opening the earth that swallowed them alive down into hell. (Numb. xvi.) Now this inward discomfort, although it end not in joy, but only in such as believe their sins are forgiven in the death and passion of Christ: (Rom. iii. v.) yet we see by the examples of the scripture that both good and bad suffer and feel this—that their spirit will take no comfort.

But now, as concerning outward and external discomfort, which is felt as well by such as have the word of God, as by such as have not the word of God, but only the law of nature. As we may see in the time of the law of nature, how Noah showed the discomfort of all men, and the destruction of the world for sin: but this discomfort did not enter into the spirits of the hearers. (Gen. v. vi.) Christ complains of the same, that the people had both discomfort and comfort preached unto them; and yet they received neither. " To whom," saith Christ, " should I compare this generation? It is like boys that sit in the streets, and cry unto their fellows, and say, We have played upon our timbrels to you, and you have not danced: we have sung mourning songs unto you, and ye have not wept." (Mat xi. Luke vii.) God, by his prophet Isaiah, saith the same: " All the day long have I extended forth my hand unto an unfaithful and intractable people:" (Isaiah lxv.) meaning, that whatsoever he threatened, or gently offered unto the Jews, it came no further than the outward ear. Whereof both the prophets and Christ himself grievously complain, as thus: " They have ears, and hear not; and they have eyes, and see not." (Isaiah liii. vi. Matt. xiii. John xii. Rom. xi. i.) St. Paul rebukes men also, who by the law of nature knew good, whereof they should

have rejoiced; and evil, whereof they should have lamented; and yet did not. And, to leave the examples of our fathers mentioned in the scripture, we may see the same by daily experience amongst ourselves. We read in the book of God, we hear by preaching, we know in our own consciences, the displeasure and anger of God against us for our own sins. God outwardly shows us the same with many horrible plagues: as by sickness, war, sedition, scarcity, enmity, and hatred; by the deliverance and surrender of a whole realm, to the utter destruction thereof, into the hands and rule of a stranger, and by the delivery and giving over of christian souls into the hands and rule of the antichristian pope, and his wicked clergy; and yet this discomfort comes no further than our outward ear. If Asaph, the author of this psalm, were amongst us, he would say, his spirit would take no consolation. And this is a horrible plague, that this psalm is read weekly amongst the popish clergy; and yet it brings their spirits to no sorrow nor feeling of God's displeasure. Wherefore our own experience teaches, that there is an inward and an outward discomfort in this psalm, and in the rest of God's most holy word. The one, penitent sinners feel, and by it amend their lives; and the other, some wicked men feel, and yet despair: but by the most part of the world it is not felt at all. Whereof comes contempt of God, the love of ourselves and of the world, and the loss of our sinful souls in the world to come. Let us, therefore, mark the scripture that teaches this discomfort, and pray to God, that, as we see it in the letter, so we may feel it in the spirit. The two manner of consolations shall be spoken of in the next verse; and also of the brightness and darkness in the psalm hereafter.

Now in the trouble of the spirit another thing is to be considered, whereof the text also makes mention; that is, how the discomfort of the spirit had continuance all the night. Whereof is to be gathered the greatness of the discomfort. For as the night is a very image of death, and the bed a very similitude of the sepulchre and grave; even so is the discomfort of the spirit in the night, that will not suffer the body to take rest, but is unquiet with itself; which unquietness of the spirit is a very similitude and image of eternal discomfort in the world to come, that both body and soul, which were created first to inherit the heavenly bliss, after the fall of Adam, should not rest by night,

as king David saith, and after this life, for sin unforgiven, should for ever be disquieted in the unquenchable fire of hell.

Here may we learn the circumstances and causes how the trouble of the prophet Asaph's spirit was increased. (Psalm xxxix. Rom. v. vii. viii.) It was trouble engendered by sin, the occasion only of all men's miseries, opened and revealed unto the conscience by the law; condemned by justice to eternal fire; (Rom. v. vii. viii.) and it continued all night; yea, how much more, the scripture declares not. In which night, the darkness thereof represented unto his eyes outwardly the horror of hell prison; and also his bed, the grave and sepulchre, wherein all flesh is clad, after the spirit departs. The winding-sheets of man's flesh after this life, are nothing but earth above and earth underneath: as, whilst it lives, it is clad with such vain things as grow upon the earth.

This whole night spent in discomfort of the spirit, declares two notable things; first, how earnestly God is indeed angry with sin, that he puts man to such long pain for it; and the next, how gracious a God he is, that will not yet suffer the discomforted spirit to despair in his trouble, as it follows marvellously in the next verse.

Verse 3. *When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God: when my heart is vexed, I will complain. Selah.*

Whilst Asaph was thus troubled in spirit, he remembered the Lord, and called unto him for help.

First, out of this verse it is to be considered, that nothing can quiet the comfortless spirit, but God alone. But forasmuch as it seems by the parts of this psalm that follow, that this verse came in by occasion, rather than to show a full remedy for the prophet's trouble, I will not write what I think thereof, but defer the remedy against trouble to such other verses as follow: because the prophet said before, that his spirit could take no consolation, and that a great many troubles follow, as the psalm declares. It shows that he was not able to bear the troubles of the mind alone without the invocation and help of God. Wherefore, before he expresses by writing all his troubles, he writes also, how, in the midst of them, he did remember and put his trust in the Lord.

Out of this we learn how necessary it is in time, at the beginning of troubles and temptations, to remember the

Lord, and to call unto him for mercy. For the more temptations do grow without present assistance of God's grace, the greater is the damnation, and the more is the danger thereof: as we may see in the examples of the scripture.

Adam fell into anxiety and discomfort of spirit, and God immediately told him of his fault, and by God's grace his discomforted spirit was quieted in the promises of God. (Gen. iii.) Cain, by the murder of his brother Abel, felt the discomfort of the spirit, and by neglecting of God's calling, died in the same. (Gen. iv.) David, being admonished by God's grace, found rest for his disquieted spirit. (2 Sam. xii.) Saul, by deferring the remedy of God's grace, died comfortless. (1 Sam. xxxi.) Peter at the beginning, through God's grace, with one look of Christ put away discomfort; Judas, with contemning Christ's admonitions, died in horrible despair. (Matt. xxvii.)

Whereof we learn to beware, as much as may be, that temptations grow not so far, that God's admonition, or the remembrance of God's name, be forgotten; but that we do, in the midst of discomforts, as Asaph the prophet did, remember and call upon the Lord for help. There is also, by this remembrance of God in the discomfort of the spirit, to be noted, what a vanity all the world and worldly things are for man in time of trouble, when God shall show and reveal unto man his sins.

This Asaph, as we read in the scripture, was a man, whom, for his virtues and good qualities, king David appointed to be a musician for the comfort of many, until the building of the temple of Jerusalem; yet now, as we see, he is not able to solace himself with his music, nor yet with any worldly thing; but his only comfort is in the Lord. And here the prophet declares the truth of Christ's sentence, written in St. Luke, (chap. ix.) "What doth it profit a man to win all the world, and to lose his own soul?" What earthly riches can comfort the inward spirit, troubled with sin, and transgression of God's law? None at all, doubtless; as the scripture shows examples every where. All king David's kingdom was not able to appease his troubled and discomforted spirit, when he said to his troubled soul: "Why art thou so heavy and sad, my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?" (Psalm xlii. xliii.)

Now this one thing more I will mark in this verse, and

no more, because it is more fully used by the prophet for the comfort of discomforted spirits in the verses that follow.

I said there were two kinds of consolation in the word of God; the one, outward in the face and lesson of the letter; and the other, inward in the understanding and feeling of the spirit. And of this division must great heed be taken: for it is not every man that reads and teaches that Christ died for the remission of sin, that shall have the consolation of the redemption promised in Christ's blood. For we see and read, (God give us grace to learn it!) that Adam caused his sons to hear of his own fall in paradise, and the redemption of his fall in the blood of Christ to come; (Gen. iv.) as Abel, his younger son, right well perceived: yet Cain, hearing the same consolation, perished in his sin. There was consolation and rest promised unto all them that came out of Egypt: but none took the benefit thereof, but Joshua and Caleb. There was in the outward letter, consolation promised unto all Abraham's children; but none received the advantage thereof, but such as in spirit followed the faith of Abraham. The scripture saith in the letter, that God would have all men to be saved; yet we see that such as follow not the spirit offered, he damned. God, by his word, in the time of the holy and blessed king Edward the sixth, offered consolation to all this realm; yet none enjoyed it but such as in their spirits learned, kept, and followed the word of consolation. So our Saviour Christ, in St. Matthew, saith, "Not every man that calleth me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God;" but he that followeth in Christ God's commandments.

There are a great many at this day, as there were before our time, that know and speak of such consolation, as is contained in the letter and outer bark of God's word; but in their consciences they feel not indeed the consolation thereof. As Judas preached abroad, with the rest of his companions, consolation to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but he showed unto others that he felt it not himself. So did the pharisees, when the scripture was read every Saturday in their synagogues, show that Messiah should come to redeem the world; yet they themselves, for the most part, felt not the consolation which the scripture testified of Christ. Even so, at this present, many read this psalm almost daily, whereof if it be in English,

he that understands only the English tongue perceives great consolation in the letter of it, and also in the prophet Asaph, that used the psalm; yet when need should be, the inward consolation of the psalm, by many is not felt. The cause is, that either they understand it not, or else mark it not: either they think, as the papists teach, that to say or sing the psalm without understanding and feeling of it in the spirit, is sufficient for the work itself; and thus it pleases God, *ex opere operato*,* as they term it.

It is too evident, and also most horrible, that men are contented only with the external consolation contained in the word of God. For if they hear that God's commandments are true, and full of consolation, they are contented to hear of them in the letter or by speech, and never learn them or feel them in the heart. The like is in the articles of our christian religion. They are thought to be true and godly; and yet the most part that so judge, neither learn them nor feel them in their consciences; wherefore they do outwardly and inwardly as much idolatry, contrary to their creed, by the commandment of men, as can be devised: for their consolation of faith is only such an outward knowledge, as most men hold withal, without any proper judgment, or singular feeling of their own spirits. The same is likewise in prayer; for in the external letter there is as much consolation as may be; but in the heart of him that prayeth, there is no understanding nor feeling of the consolation that outwardly is spoken and talked of. Therefore, mark the method of Asaph. He said that his spirit could take no consolation in all the night-time, whilst he held up his hands. And as there is not only discomfort and unquietness spoken of, but also felt; it is not only noted and written in the letter of the psalm, but also thoroughly felt inwardly in the spirit, with heaviness and anguish, without comfort and consolation. So in this verse there is consolation mentioned in the letter, in the voice, and in the mouth, and inwardly the same consolation is felt in the spirit. And as outwardly God's displeasure troubled him, so inwardly God's holy name and promises comforted him. And this is to be noted, lest we should hear of consolation outwardly, or read it in the book of the holy Bible; and yet inwardly neither feel nor know any consolation at all.

* For the work which is performed.

In the end of this verse is put this word 'Selah.' And it notes unto the reader or hearer, what a miserable and comfortless thing man is in trouble, if God be not present with him to help him. It is also put as a spur and prick for every christian man and woman to remember and call upon God in the days of their troubles. For, as the Jews say, wheresoever this word 'Selah' is, it admonishes and stirs up the reader to mark what was said before it; for it is a word always put after very remarkable sentences.

Then follow the rest of such pains and troubles, as this prophet suffered whilst the Lord laid his cross upon him, after this sort:

Verse 4. *Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so feeble I cannot speak.*

Before, he said that his spirit could take no consolation, which was a grief unspeakable, for no thought is able to comprehend the anguish of the mind, much less is the tongue able to express it. But now he shows a further increase of discomfort, and saith, that the terror of his mind was such, that he was not only comfortless, but the Lord also, to the increase of his sorrow, kept sleep from him. And as the greatness of God's punishment suffered him not to sleep; so it would not permit him to speak, but made him speechless: such was the great punishment of God towards him.

Here is the tyranny and violence of sin to be perceived and seen, which is the first thing to be noted in this verse. It takes all mirth from the spirit, and brings in heaviness and discomfort. It takes away sleep, and places for it tediousness and sorrowful watching. It takes away also the speech of the tongue, and leaves the man mute and speechless.

If sin can do such painful things in the body and soul, while they are yet conjoined together, and there is hope of remission of sin: what can it do, when the one is in the earth, and the other in hell, separated, or both of them conjoined again in the resurrection of the wicked, where there is no hope of redemption, but assurance of everlasting pain? Besides this, is to be noted in this verse containing the increase of the prophet's heaviness, what a precious jewel a man or woman hath, that has a quiet heart and a peaceable conscience. For wheresoever they are, there are all the members wholly bent unto the service

and honouring of God. The eyes shall never be turned from their service; neither shall the tongue cease, if it be able to speak, to sound forth always the glory of God, as David saith: "Mine eyes be always towards the Lord." (Psalm xxv.) Again, "I lifted up mine eyes unto the Lord. As the eyes of the handmaid attend upon her mistress; so our eyes attend upon the Lord." (Psalm cxxiii.) Again, "Mine eyes, Lord, be not proud." (Psalm cxxxi.) And in another psalm he saith, there should come neither sleep nor slumber in his eyes, until he had provided a place for the ark of God to rest in. In case the spirit is troubled, or in a contempt of God's laws, not liking his holy devices, the eyes are either troubled with overmuch watching, as we see in this psalm, or else are bent to see vanity, the lusts and concupiscence of the flesh and the world. Wherefore David prayed the Lord to turn his eyes, that they looked not upon vanity. (Psalm cxix. Prov. xxvii.) For the eye of him that has not a right spirit, is insatiable. And many times the eye, where the spirit is without the favour of God, abhors God's own good gifts. As the eyes of the Israelites loathed manna in the desert, saying, "Our eyes see nothing but manna," (Numb. xi.); even so the tongue also of the godly-spirited man will sound the glory of God, as king David used his tongue, and will not hinder it by naughty speech. (Psalm xxxv. xxxix. lxxi.)

If the spirit be void of God's fear, then it speaks maliciously, to slander the good falsely, as king David declares; or else it can speak nothing at all for trembling or quaking, as you may perceive by Asaph in this place. (Psalm vi. xii. xiv. cxl.) He that will therefore consider accordingly the greatness of this fear in the spirit, and how it takes away the office of every external member, doubtless must labour to have the spirit that David prayeth for: "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew in me a right spirit!" (Psalm li.) In which verse the prophet prayeth, first, to have such a heart as, by faith in Christ, may be clean and purged from sin; and next, to have a certain and sure spirit, that doubts not of God's promises towards him. For such a spirit within the body of man or woman, makes the heart so joyful, that no sorrow can molest it; and it strengthens every member: so that they will be given to nothing so much as to the service of God. But if the spirit be wicked, doubtless the outward members will serve nothing but iniquity; if it be

troubled, the outward members cannot be quiet. For as the soul gives life to the body; so the virtue of God in the soul, draws the outward parts of the body unto the obedience of virtue. And contrariwise, the vice of the soul draws the members of the body unto the service of sin and iniquity. (Rom. vii. viii. xii.) And as the ears and eyes of man were made by God, to be instruments to hear and see God's will and pleasure, and that by them, since man fell in paradise, knowledge might come into the soul and spirit of man, by hearing God's word preached, and seeing his sacraments ministered; so by them when abused in hearing and seeing sin and abomination, there enters much vile filthiness and transgression into the soul. (Rom. x.) Asaph, therefore, admonishes us to beware that we bring not our spirits into discomfort by sin and transgression of God's laws; for if we do, whether the offence be done in the spirit, by the evil that naturally is in it, by original sin, by the temptation of the devil, or by the means of any member of the body; doubtless the trouble of the spirit shall not only take away the office of the members—as you see in this place the speech of the tongue, and the closing of the eyes, are taken away—but at length also, God shall make the same body, and the same members to rise again at the general resurrection, (1 Cor. xv.) and they shall suffer eternal pains with the wicked spirit. Let this doctrine, therefore, teach all men to know and feel the cruelty of sin, which so painfully disquiets both body and soul; and think that if these grudgings, discomforts, terrors, and fears are so great that death itself is more tolerable and easy to bear; how much more intolerable and unspeakable are the pains of hell, which God hath ordained for all impenitent sinners? (Isa. lxvi. Matt. xxv.)

After this verse of trouble and anguish, where we see sleep was taken from the eyes, and speech from the tongue, next follows how these great sorrows were mollified and somewhat diminished.

Verse 5. *I have considered the days of old, and the years that be past.*

6. *In the night I called to remembrance my song, and communed with mine own heart: and my spirit searched diligently.*

"I did," saith the prophet, "in this great discomfort and

heaviness," consider with myself the times and days of old, wherein the Lord had helped and delivered my fathers before my time, from such troubles as I am in, and also from greater. And in the night, while I was sleepless, I remembered that many times I lauded and exalted the goodness of God in my psalms and hymns, giving him thanks for his great mercy and goodness used towards his church at all times; and in remembering God's accustomed clemency and pity, my spirit was much given to debate things."

Out of these two verses we may note divers doctrines for our consolation in the days of our trouble. And the first shall be concerning the two brightnesses and the two darknesses in the word of God. The one brightness is in the letter outwardly, and the other brightness is in the spirit and heart of the reader of the scripture. This brightness or clarity of the letter is, when by reading, hearing, or thinking of God's word, men learn and know that God made all things, and that he preserves all things, and that Jesus Christ his only Son is the Mediator between God and man, and that he pacified God's just wrath against man by his bitter death and passion. Also he knows by the external histories of the scripture, that God has many times delivered his people from dangers and perils which appeared impossible to be helped.

This clarity and brightness of the scripture, although it be necessary, yet it is not sufficient; for it stands only in bare and naked knowledge, which before God saves not, neither illuminates the man that has the knowledge, in sufficient clarity and brightness of faith, and of God's promises due in Christ unto faith. As we may see how the children of Israel had the external clarity and brightness of God's promises unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that they and their posterity should inherit the land of Canaan, which flowed with all plenty and abundance; (Gen. xii. xiii. xv. xvi. xvii.) yet, notwithstanding, such as came out of Egypt, for the most part perished in the desert and wilderness. (Numb. xiv.) The pharisees and learned men amongst the Jews had the clearness and brightness of Christ's coming, and of the place he should be born in, and they told in that respect the truth unto Herod; (Mic. v. Matt. ii.) yet for all this knowledge and clarity, they abhorred Christ when he came, and put him to death most wrongfully. The people,

in like manner, saw an external brightness in Christ, so that by his miracles and wonders they thought him worthy to be made a king; and yet, for all this, they cried out against him, "Crucify him, crucify him." The devil himself said he knew who Christ was, the Son of the Most High; and yet, for all this knowledge and clearness, he shall never be saved. (Matt. xxvii. Mark xv. Luke xx. John xix. John vi. Luke iv.) And Christ himself also perceived that this external brightness was amongst a great many that called him Lord, Lord; yet notwithstanding he said, they should not enter into the joys of heaven. (Matt. vii.) So likewise there are very many at this present time, who see the clarity and brightness of Christ outwardly in the letter, and yet follow it not here in living; neither shall they have the effect of their knowledge in the life to come: for their clearness is only knowledge, without feeling or practice of the brightness inwardly, which deserves more stripes than obscurity or darkness. (Luke xii.)

There is another clarity or brightness, which is an inward understanding and spiritual knowledge and sight of God's truth, which no man has but he that is possessed with the Spirit of God, so that whatsoever he reads in God's word himself, or hears preached of other men, he understands it, and consents unto it gladly and willingly. As for example; God spake unto Adam, and his words made him afraid, so that he trembled for fear. (Gen. iii.) Christ spake unto Paul, and he fell down flat, and could not abide Christ's voice. (Acts ix.) So that as the law rebuked sin in the voice and letter, it wrought also rebuke and discomfort in the hearts of Adam and Paul, and made them afraid inwardly, as the voice and letter were terrible outwardly. Wherefore they had not only an external clearness of God's hatred against sin, but also an internal sight and feeling of the same, as the scripture records.

The like also is in the promises of God, when they are preached or read, that promise remission of sin. The inward clarity and brightness of the same is for every man and woman to feel privately in his own conscience through faith in Christ, that the same promises do appertain and belong unto himself. As the prophet Habakkuk saith: "The just man liveth by his own faith." (Hab. ii. Rom. i.) Also when Christ said unto the woman of Canaan, that it was not good to cast the bread that appertained to the

children unto dogs, she said, "Yea, Lord; for the dogs do eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." (Matt. xv.) And so Christ himself used the brightness of his promises to Mary Magdalen: "Thy sins be forgiven thee;" (Luke vii.) applying the clearness of the letter unto the inward comfort of her soul.

The same is likewise marvellously expressed in the common creed, where every man saith, he believeth in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and that he believeth the remission of sins—meaning, that whosoever saith his creed, should see and feel in his soul the clarity and brightness of his salvation, which is contained in the letter and words of the creed. But this clearness is not seen of all men, nor yet of the most part of men, as Christ declared: "Many be called, and few chosen." (Matt. xx.) Many say, Lord, Lord, and few do the Lord's will. (Matt. vii.) Therefore Christ said marvellously concerning the clarity and brightness of God's word inwardly, in St. Luke: "Blessed be they that hear the word of God, and keep it;" (Luke xi.) by which words he declared, that many hear and see the outward light and truth of God's word, but very few there are that see the inward light and profit thereof. Of this is learned what is the cause that christians bear the name of Christ, and yet are not Christ's indeed—because a great many are contented with the name, and few understand what the name truly and verily contains in it.

And as there is in the scripture this double brightness, whereof the one lieth in the letter, and many see what it means by the external word; and the other lieth in the meaning of the letter, and is perceived only by such as have the Spirit of God; so there are two kinds and sorts of darkness and obscurity in the scripture; the one in the letter, and the other in the sense and meaning of the letter. The outward obscurity is to be seen in such as contemn the word of God, and will not read it nor hear it; as the Turks and heathen; and also the common sort that bear the name of Christ, are christened in Christ's name, and outwardly are thought to be christians indeed, and yet they know not so much as the letter of Christ's laws, which prescribes them what they should do, and what they should not do. And this obscurity is a brutish and external darkness. The other is obscurity or darkness inwardly in the text; for although the letter is well known,

and the sound thereof seems to be plain, yet the sense is not so common nor so manifest as the letter soundeth.

Whereupon St. Paul binds all men in the understanding of the letter, unto the analogy and proportion of faith, that no one place be taken contrary to many places; whereof was gathered the abridgement of our common creed, accepted at all times and of all christian men for an infallible truth; so that whosoever believed it, was accounted a good christian man. And of this obscurity of the scripture in the sense and spirit, is risen this troublesome contention about transubstantiation of bread and wine in the sacrament of Christ's body and blood; for the ungodly sort would have no substance of bread and wine to remain in the sacrament, and yet a corporeal presence of body and blood, contrary not only to the articles of our faith, which tell us he is in heaven, and shall abide there until he come to judge the quick and the dead, but also contrary to many other places of the scripture. (Matt. xxvi. Mark xiv. Luke xxii. 1 Cor. x. xi. Acts iii. Coloss. iii.)

And it is no new thing, to have and record the text and letter of the scripture, and yet lack the effect and the real consolation of the scripture indeed. For here in these two verses Asaph records and remembers God's doings mercifully in time past, and yet takes no more consolation thereof than he finds in the bark of the letter, or in the rehearsal of the histories. And the same he does of his own psalms and hymns, whereof he makes mention; and yet by the same mean his spirit is brought into no further consideration of God's truth than it was before, with much heaviness and sorrow, as the verses following do declare. So that in the affliction of the spirit he could repeat and call to his remembrance the truth, how God had dealt mercifully with his forefathers, but felt not at that time the like mercy of God towards himself; neither could he see nor feel for his consolation, the cure and succour of God's promises, which he saw in others, as all the elect of God at length doubtless shall feel. As it is said by the prophet, "As we have heard, so have we seen;" and at length, as the psalm saith, he felt himself. (Psalm xlviii.) Whether he wrote the psalm of his own sorrows and troubles, or of the sorrows and troubles of the Israelites, it makes no difference; let every man in that case use his own judgment, so that he mark the doctrine of the psalm.

There is to be noted from these verses also this doctrine, that whatsoever trouble the spirit was brought unto, whatsoever watch had taken his eyes, and whatsoever vehemency of disease had taken his speech from him; yet under all these crosses he cursed not God, nor grudged against his plagues, but, as a contented man, he gave himself to record and to call to memory how God was wont to be unto afflicted men, and took account how, in times past, he had spent his years, and found that he had made certain psalms or hymns to the glory of God, and to the praise of his holy name. Of which we learn not only patience in the time of trouble and persecution, but also how to spend our youth and transitory life, in doing or making some things that may be records and remembrances when we are gone, that we lived here to serve God, and not to serve ourselves. And it is a great help and no small consolation for a man that is in trouble and heaviness, to think that he in this life has sought the glory of God; and that testimony of conscience is more worth in the time of trouble, than all other men's deeds for him. Not that his seeking God's glory and setting forth the same can be his gage and ransom before God, but because it is a real testimony, that God once loved him, and gave him of his blessed Spirit, to indite something to God's praise and honour. And as godly psalms and virtuous hymns are testimonies of a virtuous spirit; so wanton and adulterous ballads are records of a vicious and sinful spirit. And as the remembrance of good and virtuous works in the time of sickness and trouble are joyful and comfortable, so the remembrance of wicked doings is sorrowful and painful.

We therefore are taught by this prophet to be circumspect and wary, how we accumulate and heap upon our souls infidelity, and the wicked works thereof; for as they are the only cause of trouble, so they not only work trouble, but also increase trouble, and augment the heaviness of the spirit and pains of the body, as is declared marvellously by the grave and profound sentences following; wherein he declares what it was that his spirit searched so diligently for. It was this:

Verse 7. *Will the Lord absent himself for ever, and will he be no more entreated?*

8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever, and is his promise come utterly to an end for evermore?*

9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious for ever, and will he shut up his loving kindness in displeasure?*
10. *And I said, It is mine own weakness, but the right hand of God can change these things.*

These verses declare what cogitations come to men that are in sickness or trouble, and how grievous they are unto the patient.

In these verses, first, we see a general statement of the great terror and fear of the feeling of God's displeasure and anger, in the spirit sorrowing for sin.

The first meditation of the sinful spirit was this: "Will the Lord absent himself for ever?" This may be understood two ways; for the word we call "ever" in English, has two meanings in the Hebrew tongue: sometimes it is taken for continuance and time everlasting; sometimes for a certain number of years, and the life of men. If it be taken in this place for time everlasting, the sorrows of the prophet were the greater, when he revolved with his spirit that God for sin might justly cast him into everlasting pains, the remembrance whereof is greater pain than the mortal death of the body. If this word "ever" be taken for a certain time, and the life of man, then the prophet means thus: "Will God as long as I live absent himself, and thus continue me in heaviness of spirit and sorrows as long as I live?" Which sense soever is taken, there are profitable things to be learned of it. But I suppose the latter sense to be the better, for divers causes: first, because the psalm contains the complaint and prayer of the prophet, a man of God, that cannot be brought to this desperation, that he should be cast away for ever from the favour of God unto eternal pains. And the text that saith, "It is mine own infirmity, and the right hand of the Lord can change this," bears this latter sense and explanation. For the words are of great weight, and of marvellous wisdom and consolation; and declare, that although the prophet felt the judgment of God against sin, and was in a marvellous terror and fear with the horror and sight of his sins; yet the Spirit of God testified with his spirit, that he was the child of God, and that it was a pain and punishment of the soul and body, and not a desperation and thorough casting away and absenting of God's mercy. (Rom. viii.) For the very elect of God are so chosen, so ordained, so preserved and kept, that nothing is able to take them out of God's hand. (John vi. x.) For the

godly men in the scripture rejoiced with the assurance of God's certain promise, and did not presume to do evil, as St. Paul in sundry places gives testimony. As to the Romans, where he felt and perceived the filthiness of sin, and the just judgment of God against the same; as appears by his woful cry and complaint, "Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body subject unto death?" (Rom. vii.) He felt, as we may perceive, the heavy burden and weight of God's displeasure, and yet in the midst of terror and fear, he stayed assuredly in the mercy of God through Christ. And he writes the same also to the Corinthians, and to his disciple Timothy, that his death was at hand, and that he knew that he of himself was a sinner, and by sin deserved rejection and casting away from God; yet he said that Christ had in keeping for him a crown of justice,* which he should assuredly receive at the day of his death. (1 Cor. xv. 2 Tim. iv.)

God is contented that his chosen people should suffer and bear the burden and heaviness of temptation and fear of everlasting pain, as Adam did first in paradise, (Gen. iii.) David did many times, (Psalm xlii. xliii.) Job, (chap. iii.) and others, yea, Christ himself, who said his soul was heavy even unto death, which made him sweat both water and blood. (Matt. xxvi.) But these temptations and terrors shall never overcome and cast away the person that has his faith in Christ; for none is able to take his sheep out of his hand. (John x.) Yet God withdraws his hand many times, and suffers his to be tempted, and to be comfortless, and, as it were, quite overthrown. Not that, indeed, their election can be altered, or they themselves left comfortless until the end of their lives, but for a time, as we may see by Job, who spake as horrible words, and as desperately as might be. Yet see in the end of his book, and mark what a joyful outgoing his grievous temptations had. (Job iii. xlii.) What pitiful cries were those of Christ our Saviour upon the cross! "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Yet the end was, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Matt. xxvii. Mark xv. Luke xxii. John xx. Psalm xxxiv. Acts xiv.)

It is written, that we must enter into heaven through many troubles. Now, of all troubles, the trouble of the mind and of the spirit is the greatest. Who, then, can

* Righteousness.

enter into heaven without such troubles? Doubtless, no man; for the judgment of God must begin at his house, as St. Peter saith; that is to say, none shall in this life more feel God's displeasure for sin in the spirit, or suffer more adversity in the body, than such as are of God's own household and the very elect. (1 Pet. iv. Prov. iii. Heb. xii.) Wherefore we are admonished, by the troubles and sorrows which Asaph sustained in his soul that could not rest, and in his body that could not sleep nor speak, that good men are not free from adversity; and that adversities, be they ever so great, shall not separate men from God for ever, but for a time he punishes sin, and hides the consolation of God from us: as the scripture saith: "For a time, a little while, I have forsaken thee; but I will gather thee together in wonderful mercies. In a short time of my wrath, I hid my face awhile from thee, but I will have mercy upon thee for ever, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." (Isaiah liv.)

All men that shall profitably know and feel the certainty of God's promises in this life, and enjoy them in the life to come, shall be troubled with some pain of doubtfulness of them, before they come to perfection. For as by sin death entered into the flesh, and also the flesh is subject unto sickness and adversity; so great imperfection is entered into the soul and powers thereof, by reason of sin. (Gen. iii. Rom. v.) As the minds of all men are burdened with ignorance, the heart with contumacy, and the will with frowardness; (Rom. vii. viii. Eph. ii.) so that as they are stark blind in all godly matters before regeneration and knowledge of God, very obstinate, and naturally altogether froward; (Psalm liii.) even so after regeneration and the knowledge of God, they continually resist and fight against the spirit, not only of man, in whom these powers dwell, but also against the Spirit of God, who teaches and leads the spirit of man to eternal salvation. (Rom. viii. John iii.) So it is not man that is able to overcome the wickedness of his own soul. (Philip. i. ii.) And, therefore, seeing life, through grace, dwelt in a body naturally full of sin, St. Paul said, "I do live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii.) So Asaph seems in words to be stark dead from grace, but it was not for ever; (Psalm lxxxviii.) for he felt the Spirit of God, that told him such heavy and ungodly thoughts of his spirit came of his own infirmity, and that God's right

hand could alter and change them. And this is the difference between the affliction of the godly and ungodly, as is wonderfully set forth in the psalm next before this saving one, where it is said, "There is a cup in the Lord's hand full of red wine, and he poureth out of it, but the wicked shall drink the dregs thereof, and the ungodly of the earth shall receive the bottom of it." (Psalm lxxv.) The cup in the scripture is taken many times for adversity, whereof God fills a quantity and a certain measure unto all his elect and chosen servants; but the wicked shall drink the bottom and all, and never come to rest nor ease. (Matt. xxvi. Mark xv. Isaiah lxvi. Matt. xxv.)

Out of this temptation we may learn how foolish and how impatient we are. When God sends troubles, we think such are best at ease as want them; whereas the Lord's book declares, that it is necessary, and also very expedient, that we should have them. (Prov. iii. Rev. iii. Heb. xii.) Again, there is to be noted how the prophet in the cogitations of his mind makes no mention of the grief of the body, whereof he spake before at the beginning of his troubles. For in the second and fourth verses he declares how he held up his hands all night, and cried with his voice until he was speechless, and lay waking, and could not sleep. Which sorrows now he does not repeat, but saith, his spirit was searching and inquisitive whether God would absent himself for ever, with divers like interrogatories respecting God's nature, as follow in the psalm. Whereof we learn the vileness of our own nature, and also the treason and subtlety of the devil; for as long as we sin, we have such delight and pleasure therein, as though it were but a play to transgress and break God's holy commandments. But when sickness and trouble lay the wicked body abed, and make it weak and feeble, our conscience is waked by the law of God, and we are put in such terror and fear, that nothing can quiet us. (Rom. viii. Gal. ii. iii.)

Also, as long as we sin, the devil tries to persuade us, that God is so merciful, do what we will, that he will not be angry; but when sickness or death invades, then the devil turns his tale, and persuades us that God is only extreme just, and not at all merciful. And this grief of the mind is so sore and vehement, that all the pains of the body seem nothing in comparison thereof, as we see in this place by the holy prophet Asaph, who was very sorely

disquieted in his body, yet his spirit made no account of it; but he still stayed and staggered, trembling and quaking at the heaviness and sorrow of the spirit, that could not feel, during the time of his trouble, any certainty or consolation in the promises of God.

Of this we are admonished, that whatsoever we have, if God's favour be wanting, we have nothing able to rejoice us. And of the other side, that if we lack all things, yet assuredly have God's favour, there is nothing able to make us heavy and sorrowful: as we see king Saul, having a noble kingdom, and lacking the favour of God, was always disquieted. Poor David, having the grace and favour of God, was quiet and contented with all things, saying, "If God will, he may restore me; if he will not, his will be done." (1 Sam. xvi. xxiv. 2 Sam. xv.)

The assurance of God's promises made Paul glad to die; (2 Tim. iv.) and the mistrust and despair of God's promises made Judas weary to live. (Matt. xxvi.) The certainty of God's truth made St. Stephen die quietly, in the assurance of eternal life. (Acts vii.) The uncertainty and doubtfulness of God's mercy caused Saul to die in the fear of eternal death. (1 Sam. xxxi.) Riches of this world are treasures much esteemed and valued, friends and lovers are much sought for and warily kept, and health of body is highly regarded and preserved with much care; yet, if the soul be destitute of the assurance of God's grace, the rest seem to be of no value at all. As we see, Saul in his kingdom, with riches, strength, and friendship, yet his mind was vexed, still an evil spirit, and God's Spirit departed, his sorrows were incomparable. (1 Sam. xvi.) So that we learn, that not only the goods appertaining to the body are nothing worth, where the spirit wants the grace of God, but also where the spirit is troubled, the goods of the body are little felt, and nothing valued, as we see by this prophet in this psalm.

The other part of his cogitations in the time of his sickness was this: "Will he be no more entreated?" This grievous temptation, whether God would be entreated to forgive sin any more, may have two meanings; the one generally, and the other particularly; generally, as thus—whether God, once offended, will be merciful and forgive, or not? Particularly—whether God, whose nature is merciful, will forgive the man that now seeks for mercy by faith; as he has in time past forgiven all men that asked

it with repentance in faith? The first sense and taking of the text generally, is exceedingly wicked and blasphemous —to think that God once offended with any man, will never forgive again! Of this opinion was Cain, when he said his sins were greater than they might be forgiven, (Gen. iv.); and he thought God would be no more entreated, because he judged his fault greater than the mercy of God that forgiveth faults. And wheresoever this judgment of the spirit is, this sentence is verified; God will be entreated no more.

And as every man who is thus minded, that his own sins are greater than can be forgiven, even so has he the like mind and judgment also of all other men's sins that are like unto his, thinking them to be greater than that they may be forgiven; for he that despairs of his own faults, cannot think well that other men's faults as great as his own are remissible. As Judas, who hanged himself for betraying of Christ, could not think well of Peter that denied Christ, but judged of Peter as he did of himself, saying, God will be entreated no more. (Matt. xxvii. xxvi.)

Of this wicked judgment of God's mercy, whether he will be entreated any more by a sinner, after he hath sinned, I will speak no more; but they that desire to read how horrible a thing it is, may have many psalms that do declare it; namely, Psalms x. and lxxiii. In one of them it is said by the wicked, that God has forgotten the earth, and cares neither for the godly life of the godly and virtuous, nor the ungodly life of the ungodly and wicked. And in the other psalm they make a doubt, whether there be any knowledge in God, of man and of his life, or not. But these sorts of people are too horrible and blasphemous, and not to be rehearsed, or much spoken of.

The other sense of this place, which is more particular, is the better sense for the argument and meaning of the psalm; that is, to ask whether God will be entreated no more, as touching the remission of his own sin; or else whether God will no more be merciful to help him out of trouble, who especially and particularly suffers the trouble. And this question so asked is very common and familiar to christians, and puts them to great trouble and heaviness. As we may see that this prophet Asaph considered the years before him, and what God did to his elders, and found that they received remission of their sins, and great benefits in this world at God's hand. So do a great

number of men; in hearing and reading the scripture of God, they see and perceive the remission of many men's sins, and how mercifully God dealt with them; yet when they feel their own sin, and suffer their own cross and trouble, they have much ado, and with great difficulty do they believe that God will be as good unto them, being each of them sinners, and each afflicted, as he was unto the great number of those, of whom they read in the scripture, that God forgave them their sins, and preserved them in most horrible and dangerous troubles.

Therefore, this is a common wisdom and daily experimented sentence: "When other men are sick, we can give good counsel patiently to bear it." When other men are afflicted and troubled, we can speak of many means to quiet them. When they are in any mistrust of God's promises, we can comfort them with many arguments of faith; but most commonly, if we are sick ourselves, troubled, or in mistrust of God's promises, we can ease or comfort ourselves very little. And good cause why; for God that giveth of his own gift and only free liberality, wisdom, knowledge, learning, and consolation, giveth also the grace that the said virtues may work their operation, and expel the infirmities and diseases wherefore these wisdoms and virtues were ordained. As it is marvellously noted of St. Paul, "I have planted, and Apollos hath watered, but God gave the increase." (1 Cor. iii.)

The word of God is a means to teach truth, and to condemn falsehood; to place virtue, and to remove vice; to give consolation, and to banish and put away diffidence and distrust, but God giveth and worketh the effect thereof. (Rom. i. Matt. x. xxviii.) Meat is made to preserve the body, but if God give not strength, it misses the purpose. (Acts xvi.) The horse and the man are means to overcome, but in battle God giveth the victory. (Prov. xxi.) The preacher preaches God's word, but God opens and teaches the mystery thereof: man heareth, but God giveth the understanding. Asaph remembered God's works, and had in mind his own godly psalms, but God must give the consolation. He saw the truth, and knew that God was faithful; but the joy and profit thereof was in the distribution and gift of God, as we may well perceive by this sorrowful interrogatory: "Will he be entreated no more?"

From this part we learn how we ought to pray, when

we read or hear God's promises for our salvation, and how necessary the prayer is which godly men made in the scripture: "Lord, help my unbelief; Lord, increase our faith." (Mark ix.) The poor man that heard and saw Christ's mercy and liberality in healing of others, desired also health for his own child. Christ said, If he believed, all things were possible. The poor man said, "I believe, Lord; help mine unbelief." (Luke xvii.)

The apostles, when they heard Christ speak of forgiveness of one another, said, "Increase our faith, good Lord;" as though they had said, Except thou give us strength to believe and credit thy godly lessons, we shall take no advantage or profit by them. Therefore, let the preacher of God, the reader of God's word, the hearer of God's word, and the thinker upon the same, many times before, also while they are speaking, thinking, reading, or hearing of God's word, pray in their spirits, that the word of God may work in them the thing wherefore the word was instituted and appointed of God; or else we shall be, as St. Paul saith, always learners, and yet never come to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Tim. iii.)

And I do verily think, and am truly persuaded, that for lack of earnest and continual prayer, with lifting up of my heart unto God, whilst I preached his most holy word unto the people, God judged me not worthy to see such fruits of my labours as I hoped for. And, also, because the people did not heartily pray to understand God's pleasure by his preached word, they are accounted unworthy of such salvation as God offered them by his word, and the true preaching of his mysteries. Let all men, therefore, pray to God in Christ, that they may be the better for the hearing, recording, remembering, or reading of God's word; for notwithstanding they have amongst them the book of God, yet without God's singular grace, they shall be troubled with one of these two evils: either to mock and scorn at the scripture, caring not whether they learn it or no; or else, when they have learned it, to doubt whether it be true or no. And then follow these questions: "Will God absent himself for ever?" and, "Will God be no more entreated?" with such other doubts as follow in this psalm: with much heaviness unto the spirit where such demands rest and have place.

Then follows the third demand by this troubled prophet, "Is his mercy clean gone for ever?"

Here in this demand are two things to be noted; the one declaring a fault in the prophet's faith, and the other expressing a verity in the prophet's knowledge. The fault in his faith was to doubt or to stand in a mammering* of God's mercy, which is most sure, and endureth for ever and ever; and to ask this question, whether his mercy were clean gone for ever? The verity of his knowledge was, to judge and say that it was God's mercy that forgave sins, and not his or any other men's merits that could deserve the pardoning of sin; as you may see how sinful Saul for his sin thought to have appeased God with sacrifice, (1 Sam. xv.) and the proud pharisee with his pretended good works. (Luke xviii.) But here in this knowledge, that the prophet complained of the departure of God's mercy, is set forth, that mercy alone appeases God's wrath in Christ for the sin of man. And what works soever are done, except God's mercy pardon the sin, they all can neither please God, nor quiet the conscience and troubled spirit of him that doeth the works. (Exod. xxxiv. Deut. v. vii. Psalm xxxiii. li. lvi. lxxxv. cxxx. cxliii.); as may be seen in the example of St. Peter, and the rest of the apostles. When St. Peter walked upon the sea coming towards Christ, and felt the wind strong and tempestuous, he began to fear; and when he began to sink, he cried, "Lord, save me." And the Lord put forth his hand and took him, and said unto him, "Thou of little faith, why doubtest thou?" (Matt. xiv.)

Here we see, if God helped us of his mercy no more than our own merits deserved, or else no more than the gifts of God, faith, hope, and charity are become qualities in us, we should surely perish. Therefore, this place of the prophet Asaph, where he demanded this question, Whether God's mercy be gone for ever? teaches us, that of all things we should be most assured of this, that mercy only is the help of man's troubles and damnation. But as I said before, that there were two manner of clarities and brightness in the word of God; so now I say, there are two manner of mercies of God mentioned in the scripture: the outward mercy is in the letter which men read and sing every day, and speak and talk of; but the other is inward.

When men cannot feel God's mercy in their conscience, as they hear it spoken of, and as they read it in the book,

* Hesitating about.

they are troubled and full of anguish and pain; and as long as they are in this case, without God's mercy, they can do nothing that pleases God, nor content themselves. But as soon as the spirit is assured, and feels that God for his mercy forgives and forgets the iniquity that the spirit and body have committed and done against God, it rejoices and is so glad, that it will do nothing but that which pleases and is acceptable unto God, and in Christ shall content and quiet his own conscience. As for example: Adam, before he inwardly felt the mercy of God promised in Christ, to forgive and remit his sin and offence, in what heaviness was the poor man! He hid himself, and could not abide the voice of the living God, (Gen. iii.) for he felt that his doings pleased neither God nor himself. But when grace had assured him of God's mercy, he fell in the spirit to quietness: for where the Spirit of God testifies and bears record with the spirit of man, that he is the child of God, there is joy and consolation, with this joyful song and melody: "Father, Father." (Rom. viii.) So that wheresoever this song is felt in the spirit, there are such joys as no tongue can express, as all the book of Solomon's Song marvellously declares.

And where the mercy of God is not, there is either the abomination of sin, and continuance therein, without any fear or grudge of conscience at all; or else such heaviness of spirit, that despair quails and oppresses the spirit for ever. Yet shall the spirit and soul of man feel this for a time, while God hides his merciful face: "Is his mercy clean gone for ever?" which cogitations of the mind are very bitter and sorrowful, as all men of God do know who have felt them, and as the prophet declares in the process of his psalm, in this sort: "And is his promise come utterly to an end for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? And will he shut up his loving kindness in displeasure?" These demands and questions of his own mind and spirit that was troubled, are no more in effect than troubles which he named before. But his calling the trouble by so many names declares that his spirit was, for the time, so disquieted, that the pains, in a manner, could not well be named or expressed. As it is to be seen always when the mind of man is brought into an excellency and profoundness of mirth or sorrow, then it is so ravished with the vehemency of them both, that the

tongue is not able to express the inward joy nor the inward sorrow, as it is to be seen as well in profane writers as in the holy word of God. Read the eighteenth psalm of king David, which he sung to the Lord when he was free and delivered from all his enemies, and you will see what a change of words he used to name God, and to express what he thought of God in his heart, and with what metaphors he expresses the strength of God, which overcame all his enemies. The psalm is to be read and marked. Again, read the sepsalms, xlii. xliii., where you will perceive the prayer of David, wherein is described a vehement agony and most bitter battle between faith and desperation; and there mark what words he hath found out to express the sorrows of his heart, that was so sorely put in doubt by desperation and weakness of faith. "The hart being wounded, was never more desirous to come to the water, than my soul desireth to come to thee, O God!" And at length, when he can find no more words to utter the pensiveness of his heart, he turns his words inward to his own soul, and asks why she is so heavy and sad. You may see also the very same joyful and sorrowful spirits in the Song of Solomon, and in the Lamentations of Jeremiah the prophet. In the one, it seems that the soul united unto Christ is in such joy as the tongue cannot express; and in the other, for sin the soul is afflicted in such a sort, that it cannot tell how to express the heaviness thereof.

Also in these demands of the prophet, which he made to himself in his spirit—for as the text saith, he revolved the matter with his own spirit—there is to be considered this doctrine: How easy a thing it is to teach and comfort other men, and how hard a thing it is for a man to teach and comfort himself in the promises of God. St. Paul found fault therewith, and said to the Jew: "Thou teachest another man, and teachest not thyself." (Rom. ii.) And Judas went forth with the eleven other of his fellows, to teach God's mercy in Christ unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but he neither followed his own doctrine, nor yet took any comfort of remission of sins in the promises of God, but hanged himself desperately. (Matt. x. xxvii.) Wherefore it is very expedient for every man and woman that hath learned, and doth know the truth of God, to pray that they themselves may follow the truth; and for such as know and teach others the consolation of the

scriptures of God, that they may, with knowledge of them, feel them indeed, and with speaking of them to others for their learning, they may speak them to themselves for their own edifying.

But, doubtless, it is an easy matter for a man to speak of comfort and consolation to others, but a hard thing to feel it himself. Virtue is soon spoken of for other men's instruction, but the putting thereof in practice and use is very hard; yea, not only in the scholar that is taught, but also in the master that instructs. Beware of despair, every man can say; but to eschew* despair in great conflicts of the mind, is a hard matter. Read the book of psalms well, and you will see the experience thereof is most certain and true. In the sixty-second psalm you shall have this commandment to all men: "Trust ye always in Him, ye people:" yet when it came to the trial in himself, you may see with what heaviness and great trouble of mind he came to the trust in the Lord. You may learn by these psalms, indited by king David, that he easily taught God's religion, and how men should put their trust in the Lord; (Psalm xli. xliii.) and yet how hard it was to do and practise himself, that which he taught unto others. Asaph also declares the same; for in the seventy-third psalm he teaches what men should think and judge in adversity—that God would be good unto Israel. But in this psalm, (lxxvii.) he himself being under the rod and persecution of God, is come to questioning and demanding; "Will God absent himself for ever? Will he be no more entreated? Is his mercy clean gone for ever?" with many other demands, declaring unspeakable troubles and difficulties of the mind, before it is brought to a perfect consent and full agreement unto the promises of God. So that we see the excellent prophets and most virtuous organs and instruments amongst sinful men, knew it was an easy matter to speak of faith and virtue, and yet a very hard thing to practise true faith, and to exercise virtuous living.

St. Paul shows to the Romans the same was in himself; (chap. viii.) for he had more ado, in Christ, to get the victory over sin in himself, than to speak of the victory unto others by his mouth; and more ado to mortify and kill the flesh, and to bring it in subjection to the spirit, than to practise the death of the flesh in himself, and to

* Escape, avoid.

follow the Spirit. He spake and uttered with his mouth most godly doctrine, for the destruction of sin; but with what prayers, tears, and clamours to God, he did the same in himself, read 2 Cor. xii. Rom. xii. viii. 2 Cor. vi. Gal. v. Eph. v.

The old saying is, 'Knowledge is no burden,' and indeed it is a thing easy to be borne; but to put knowledge in experience, the body and the soul shall find pain and trouble. And yet Christ's words, where he saith, "My yoke is light, and my burden easy," (Matt. xi.) are most true to such as have wrestled with sin, and in Christ got the upper hand. To them I say, the precepts of virtuous living are easy and sweet, as long as the Spirit of God bears the overhand in them. But when faith waxes faint, and the flesh strong, then the Spirit of God cannot command nor desire any thing, but both body and soul are much offended with the hearing thereof, and more grieved with the doing of it. (Rom. vii.) St. Peter likewise makes mention of the same; for when Christ bade him follow him, meaning that he should die for the testimony of his word, he liked not that, but asked Christ what John should do; being, doubtless, in great perplexity when Christ told him that he should suffer the pains of death. But here are to be noted two things; the one, that as long as affliction is talked of generally, and other men's pains are spoken of, so long can every man and woman hear of affliction, yea, and commend the persons that suffered affliction, as we see at this day. All men are contented to hear of the death of Christ, of the martyrdom of his saints, and of the affliction and imprisonment of his godly members: but when the same or the like should be tried and practised by ourselves, we will none of it, we refuse it, and we abhor it. Yea, so much that although Christ and those saints, whose names are most common and usual in our mouths, suffered the vilest deaths that could be devised, we will not suffer as much as the loss of a friend, or of the deceivable goods of this unstable and transitory world. So that in the generality we are very godly, and can commend all godly martyrs and sufferers for God's sake; but, alas! in the particularity we are very ungodly, and not willing to follow any martyr or suffer at all. Also, as long as we are without danger for Christ's sake, we can speak of great dangers, and say, that we will suffer all extremity and cruelty. But when it cometh to pass, that an enemy to

God and his word shall say indeed, 'Forsake thy religion, or else thou shalt die,' as Christ said unto Peter, "When thou art old, another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldest not:" (John xxi.) then a little threatening of another man wholly affrights this man that said he would suffer all troubles: as Peter said, if he should lose his life, he would not deny his Master; but when another, yea, a poor maid, asked him, whether he were one of Christ's servants, and made no mention at all of loss of life or goods, he would not hazard himself to bear so much as the name of Christ's disciple! (Matt. xxvi.)

Thus we see the vileness and frailty of our own nature, how weak we are to suffer indeed, when of necessity we must bear the cross, and can, by no means, avoid it. How troublesome also it is both to body and soul, this psalm and place of the scripture declares; and therefore at the end of these temptations is put, "Selah:" a word that makes, as it were, an outcry against the corrupt nature of man for sin. As St. Paul said, "I know that there dwelleth in my flesh no good thing." (Rom. vii.) Therefore, to admonish man thereof indeed, and to show him his own condemnation, the word is put there to cause the reader or hearer of the place to mark and bewail the wretchedness thereof. As the prophet himself does in the next verse.

THE FOURTH PART.

HOW A MAN TAKES CONSOLATION IN TIME OF HIS TROUBLE.

Verse 10. *And I said, this is my infirmity: but these things the right hand of God can change.*

Here are life and death, and the occasions of both, marvellously set forth. He said that it was his infirmity that caused him to question and doubt of God's mercy; whereby he has disburdened God, and charged himself with sin and doubtfulness: and so much all men see and find in themselves—that damnation is of ourselves, and salvation only of God. (Hosea xiii.) There is also to be noted in this infirmity, that it occupies not only the body, but also the soul; for he saith, these cogitations and questions, as touching the doubtfulness of God's mercy, were the devices and acts of his mind; so that both his

body and soul were comfortless; and good cause why; for in both of them were sin and abomination against God. And of these two parts of man, the body and the spirit, came these dubitations of God and of his promises: which fruits of corruption engender eternal death, except sin be forgiven.

And here the wisdom of the flesh is seen to be very enmity unto God, working continually the breach of God's commandments, and the destruction of man's salvation, as much as in it lies. (Rom. viii.) But in the second part of the verse is life, and the occasion thereof, which is a sure trust that God can remove despair, and put in place thereof faith, hope, and sure confidence. And the occasion of this help is not man's merits, but the right hand of God; that is to say, God's power inclined to save man by mercy.

Of this doctrine certain things are to be marked by every reader and hearer of this psalm. First, in this verse is declared how man takes consolation in time of his trouble, which is the fourth part of the psalm; and in the same part the psalm ends. He saith, it was his infirmity that made him to question and demand in his spirit such doubtful things of God, and of his promises; whereof we learn that consolation begins where sorrow and heaviness are first felt; for the spirit can take no solace by God's promises, until such time as it feels by God's law how sinful it is for the transgression thereof. Therefore Solomon saith: "The just man is the first accuser of himself." (Prov. xiii.) And so the prophet Asaph in this place confesses, that these cogitations and profound thoughts against God came of his own infirmity and sin. And the knowledge of a man's own wickedness from the bottom of the heart—although it be a shame to speak or remember the vileness of sin, wherewith the sinner hath most grievously transgressed God's commandments—yet is this knowledge and confession of our sin and iniquity very necessary, and is, as it were, an induction* to the remission thereof, as it is to be seen in this prophet, and in the prophet David. For here is first confessed, that all sins in him came of his own infirmity, and all consolation against sin came of God's right hand. And the prophet David saith, when he was in like trouble for sin, "I determined to confess against myself mine own iniquity; and

* Introduction, a leading unto.

thou, Lord, forgavest the wickedness of my sin." (Psalm lxxiv. xxxii.) But here is to be noted in this, that the confession of sin is, as it were, an induction and beginning of consolation; that confession of sin is not the beginning of consolation, except he that makes the confession be assured in his heart of God's promises in Christ, that of mercy in Christ's death, his sins be forgiven; as you may see in these two prophets. The one said, "It is mine infirmity that worketh this doubtfulness in my soul." And the other said, "I determined to condemn myself for sin."

Thus far to feel sin, to bewail sin, to speak of sin, and to remember sin, is death; and an increase of diffidence in God's promises; and an induction to desperation. But as knowledge and confession have a certainty and assurance of God's forgiveness annexed unto them, there is in confession and knowledge of sin, partly a beginning of consolation against sin. I call it partly, or as an occasion, because, first of all, God by his word, or by his punishments, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, opens the soul of the sinner, to see and know his sin, also to tremble and quake at sin, rather than to hate and abhor sin. (Rom. vii. 1 Sam. xv. 2 Sam. xii.) And from these principles and originals comes the humble and lowly confession of sin, not to man, but unto God; except it be such an open sin done against man, as the man knows of, whom the sin is committed against. Then must the offender of man also reconcile himself to the man that is offended, according to the commandment of God. Therefore we must mark what confession and acknowledging of our own infirmities is: (Mark v. xviii. James v. Luke xvii.) for every confession is not acceptable before God, nor the beginning of consolation, as these examples declare. Judas said openly in the face of the court, where Christ our Saviour was arraigned, that he had offended in betraying innocent blood; but there followed no faith nor hope of forgiveness: (Matt. xxvii. Mark xv.) so that, for lack of faith in Christ's blood, desperation and hanging of himself followed his confession; whereby it is evident that confession of sin without faith is nothing worth, but a testimony of a desperate man's damnation.

King Saul, after being long urged by the prophet Samuel, was brought to confess that he had offended in preserving alive Agag, king of the Amalekites, and the fattest of his cattle. (1 Sam. xv.) "I have offended,"

said Saul, " for I have broken and transgressed the commandment of God." But what followed? Did there follow, " God's right hand can remedy my sin," as this prophet Asaph saith: (Psalm lxxvii.) or " God hath forgiven the iniquity of my sin," as David said, (Psalm xxxii.) or else, " God be merciful unto me a sinner," as the publican said? (Luke xviii.) No; but this ensued: " I pray thee," said Saul to Samuel, " bear thou my sin." In this man's confession of sin there was not the beginning of consolation, but of more sorrows; for his heaviness from that day more and more increased with his sins, until he was slain. (1 Sam. xxxi.) And the cause thereof was this: he would that Samuel, being but a man, should have pardoned his sin; whereas none can do it but God, (Matt. ix. Luke v. Mark ii.) as it is notably to be seen in king David; for when he said he had offended the Lord, Nathan the prophet said, " And God hath taken away thy sins."(2 Sam. xii.) Wherein is declared, that the minister can but pronounce to the sinner, that God in Christ forgiveth sin. So that we see Judas's confession of sin was nothing worth, because he found no faith nor trust for the remission thereof, and Saul's confession was of no value, because he trusted and desired consolation at man's hand, and not at God's.

Yet in Saul's confession there was something good, in that he confessed his fault to God, although it were long first, and in a manner wrested out of his mouth by the prophet Samuel; and in that point he did as David did, who said, " I have offended the Lord." (Psalm li. 2 Sam. xii.) And this is to be noted, because now-a-days men are taught to confess their sins to the departed saints, that know not what the outward works of men are upon the earth, much less the inward and sinful cogitations of the heart. (Isaiah lxiii. Eccles. ix. 1 Kings viii.) So that in this part the papists' confession is worse than Saul's, and in the other part it is like it: for as Saul trusted to the merits of Samuel, and would have him to bear his sin; (1 Sam. xv.) so do people trust, that the priest's hand upon their head, and the penance enjoined them by the priests, shall be a clean remission and full satisfaction for all their sin; but their sins are as much forgiven them before God as Saul's, that is to say, nothing at all.

But where sin is known and confessed from the very heart unto God, (1 John i.) although it be a bitter thing,

and also a shameful thing, to feel and bear God's displeasure for sin, the burden whereof is very death, and more grievous than death itself; (Psalm cxxx.) yet where confidence and trust in the mercy of God is annexed with it, there follows great consolation and comfort; as it is to be seen in this prophet, who spake with a strong faith boldly: "The right hand of God can change these things;" so that the latter part of this verse has more comfort than the first part has discomfort. And it is a plain doctrine, that although the sins of man are many and horrible, yet they are fewer and less in estimation many thousand times than God's mercies. (Isaiah i.) Death is declared in the first part of the verse in this, that man's infirmity is not only sinful in body and soul, but also to be doubtful of God's mercy and holy promises: yet in the second part by grace is set forth life, and entire deliverance from the tyranny of the devil, the servitude of sin, the accusation of the law, and the infirmity of nature, by the strong and mighty power of God, whose mercy in Christ is always ready to help poor, afflicted, and troubled sinners. (Ezek. xviii. 1 John i.) After this confession of sin, and the great confidence that the prophet had in God for his mighty power and mercies' sake, who was both able by power, and ready with will, to help and remedy the troubled spirit and great adversities of the prophet, he goes forth in the consolation, and takes yet more and more of God's benefits, used in times towards such as were afflicted, in this manner.

Verse 11. *I will remember the works of the Lord, and call to my mind thy wonders of old time.*

12. *I will think also of thy works, and my talking shall be of thy doings.*

13. *Thy way, O God, is holy; who is so great a God as our God?*

14. *Thou art the God that doest wonders, and hast declared thy power amongst people.*

15. *Thou hast mightily delivered thy people, even the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.*

16. *The waters saw thee, O God: the waters saw thee, and were afraid: the depths also were troubled.*

17. *The clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad.*

18. *The voice of thy thunder was heard round about; the*

lightnings shone upon the ground; the earth was moved, and shook withal.

19. *Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.*

20. *Thou leddest thy people like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

From the means by which men take consolation in adversity, which the prophet now mentions, first, we learn what difference there is between the consideration of God's works advisedly and by faith, and the consideration of God's works rashly and without faith; which diversity is to be seen in this psalm. For of the one part, as touching the remembering of God's works out of faith and in faith, he spake before in the second verse; and in the fourth verse, how that he considered the works and old doings of the Lord when he was troubled. But as you have heard, because his spirit was in a doubtfulness and mammering* as to the certainty of God's doings, he felt no consolation thereof, but much heaviness and anguish of mind. For those demands, "Will God absent himself for ever? Will he be no more merciful?" and such like heavy and doubtful complaints, would never proceed but from a sorrowful and much troubled conscience. But now, after God's Spirit hath wrought in his spirit this assurance and judgment, that God can change in him the conditions of his miseries, as you may see, he makes no more complaint of doubtfulness, neither remembers any more the fearfulness of his conscience, but goes forth with the repetition and rehearsal of all things comfortably, how God, in time past, helped troubled spirits and afflicted persons, that put their trust in him. So that of this we learn, that whosoever has a sure faith in God, takes consolation from God's word and works. And such as have not first true faith in God, cannot, in the spirit, receive comfort of God's word or works. Outwardly, men may marvel at God and his works; but inwardly, it eases not the heaviness, nor yet quiets the grudge of conscience.

Wherefore it behoves us all, that we pray earnestly unto God to give us faith to believe his word and works, when we hear, read, or see them. For the word and works of God do not comfort the unfaithful, as we may see by the scripture, where God saith, he stretched forth his hand all

* Hesitation.

day long to a people that believed not; for such as have ears and hear not, eyes and see not, are rather the worse for God's word and works than the better. (Isaiah lxv. Rom. x. Isaiah vi. John xii.) You shall see where the spirit of David was replenished with faith; he was so assured and ascertained of God's present help, that he said he would not fear, although a thousand men environed and compassed him round about. (Psalm iii.) No, he would not fear, though he should walk in the shadow of death. (Psalm xxiii.) At another time, when faith quailed and waxed faint, he was trembling in his spirit, and fearful in his body: as we may see when he felt his spirit wax faint, he said, "My soul is troubled very sore, and my bones be weakened." (Psalm vi. xxxviii.) And in others of his psalms, he shows that his soul was very heavy and comfortless, and could take no consolation. (Psalm xlii. xliii.)

Also when the spirit is assured of God's grace, then the eyes cannot look upon any work of God, but the mind, by the contemplation and sight hereof, takes unspeakable consolation: as David declares in his psalms, and saith, he would see the heavens, the works of God's fingers, and would mark how one day was an induction to another, and how the heavens praised the Lord. (Psalm viii. xix. cxlviii.)

At another time, when the consolation and life of the spirit was overwhelmed with troubles, he could not see at all with his eyes, but cried and complained that he was stark blind. (Psalm xxxviii.) And also in that marvellous psalm, (lxxxviii.) wherein prayer is made to be delivered from the horror and feeling of sin, the prophet saith, that his eyes waxed dim and blind. The same is to be seen likewise in the crosses and afflictions that God sends. As long as true faith and confidence remain in the heart, all troubles are welcome and thankfully taken; as we read, when Job had news that his goods and children were taken from him suddenly, he most patiently said, "God gave them, and God hath taken them away; as God would, so it is done." (Job i. ii.) But when faith quailed, and the spirit was troubled, then followed these impatient words: "I would my sin were laid in one balance, and my pain in another;" (Job vi.) as though God had laid more upon him than he had deserved. When the spirit was quieted, notwithstanding all his poverty and nakedness,

he rejoiced, and was contented with his birth and coming into the world, and also with the state in the world appointed unto him by God, saying, "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart hence again." (Job i.) But when faith fainted, then came out these words: "The day, the night, and the time, be cursed wherein I was born," (Job iii.) with many more horrible words, as the text declares. So that we see, where God's Spirit is wanting, there is no learning nor consolation to be had of any thing; as it is opened in this psalm, in that, at first the prophet recorded God's works, and was so troubled in his mind, that he occupied his cogitations thus: "Will God be no more merciful? Hath God shut up his mercy in his wrath?" But now in the second record of God's works, he begins his entrance quite contrary, and saith, God's right hand can change his sorrow, and turn his heaviness into mirth. And upon this ground and sure hope of God's promises, he proceeds to a consideration and deep record of God's facts in this sort: "I will remember the works of the Lord," &c.

In this verse and in the next following are contained three kinds of words; remembrance, meditation, and speech. By the first we learn, that it profits nothing to read or hear God's word, except we remember it, and bear it away with us. By the next we learn, that it avails us not to learn and bear the word of God in remembrance, except, by meditation and thinking upon it, we understand what it means. And by the third we learn, that neither the remembrance of it nor the understanding profits, except we teach and instruct others in the same, of whom we have charge, if we may.

Now to consider further, we see how the prophet begins with this word "remembrance," whereof it appears that he had before learned out of God's word, God's nature towards penitent sinners, to forgive them; and towards wilful, obstinate, and impenitent sinners, to be a just judge to punish them. Here is the ignorance of all people condemned, that never learn to know God's word in sickness nor in health; but when they are troubled or sick, they send for such as they think and fancy have learned and remember how God's word comforts in adversity. And then, if he that is sent for is not learned in God's word, he cannot remember how God is wont to comfort the troubled or sick: then all that the sick man hears of an

ignorant comforter or counsellor, is as wholly void of consolation or counsel, as though he had never sent for a counsellor or comforter. For no man can have more of another, than the other has himself, which is neither knowledge, counsel, nor consolation out of God's word: therefore he is not able to give knowledge, consolation, nor comfort to another.

If Asaph had been as the most part of the people now-a-days are, that fall sick and into many kinds of trouble, and had sent for an ignorant fool, such as commonly is called a ghostly father, he had been in as great trouble as these wretched souls are who, being comfortless, seek comfort where none is to be had, seek knowledge where none is, and seek counsel where ignorance abounds. Let all men therefore remember this verse, that when the prophet was in trouble, he remembered the wisdom and marvellous works of God, for he knew them before. So let all men and women learn, before they come into trouble, a true knowledge of God, that in the time of trouble they may remember it to their consolation. But now to the second word, where he saith, he will meditate in all the works of God.

Here is another notable doctrine, that neither the learning of God's word nor the remembrance thereof profits any thing, except it is understood and applied to the use that God has appointed it for. And here two sorts of people are wonderfully condemned. The one sort are those, who, for custom or bondage to their profession, learn without the book a great part of the scripture; or else by daily use in singing or saying their service, as it is called, they learn to sing and say a great part of the Bible. But this avails nothing, for they understand it not in the sense and meaning that the Holy Ghost appointed it for, nor perchance even the grammatical construction thereof. And these remembrances of God's word are nothing but lip-labour, and honouring of God with the mouth, but the heart is far away, which before God is in vain, and of no estimation. (Isaiah xxix. Matt. xv.) The other sort of people are such as profess the gospel, who have learned much, and can remember much, but follow very little; so that they are nothing the better for it.

The third word is, that the prophet saith, he will speak of God and his works, as outwardly and inwardly he remembers them, and with his spirit meditates on them, as

it is likewise the part and duty of all christian men so to do. For as they believe in the heart to justice,* so they will confess it to salvation, as St. Paul saith to the Romans. (Chap. x.)

Here in this word three sorts of people are condemned: the one will not confess and teach the truth, for fear of losing their advantage; the second will not confess and teach the truth, for sluggishness and sloth; and the third will not confess and teach the truth, for timidity and fear.

In the first sort are such as know doctrines for the soul, or medicines for the body, and yet because they get gain thereby, they would not have too many know thereof, lest their own gains should be the less. As we see, such a one as knows a good method and order to teach, would be loth it should be common, because his estimation and gain, as he thinks, should diminish and decrease. The excellent physician would not have his skill made common, lest many men, as skilful as he, should part his gains amongst them.

The second sort of men are those that come to great livings by their learning, and when they have the reward of learning, they teach no more, as bishops and ministers of the church, whom the prophet calls "dumb dogs that cannot bark," (Isaiah lvi.), their mouths are so choked with the bones of bishoprics and benefices. I speak of such as know the truth and love it, and not of such as neither know it nor love it: for although those men speak but seldom, yet it is too much, for better it were never to speak, than to speak falsely.

The third sort are our Nicodemus's, that can speak of Christ in the night, or to their friends, but openly they will confess nothing with the mouth, nor do any thing outwardly, that should sound to God's glory, for fear of the world. And these men are assured they shall have their reward, that Christ will deny them before his Father which is in heaven. (Matt. x.)

Of this we learn wherein our profession consists: first, to learn God's word; secondly, to bear it in our heart and remembrance; thirdly, to understand it; and fourthly, to speak of it to the glory of God, and the edifying of our neighbours; and God's word this way used shall keep us

* Righteousness.

humble and lowly in prosperity, and patient and strong in adversity.

But in these two verses are more words necessary to be considered, if we would take consolation in adversity. The first, "I will remember the works of the Lord, and that of old time," or from the beginning. The second, "I will think also of all the works of the Lord," &c.

In that the prophet saith, he will remember the works of the Lord of old time, or from the beginning, we learn that it is expedient to know, or at the least, not to be ignorant of any book in the scripture: for when we find not consolation in the one, we may find it in the other. And where he saith, he will remember all the works of the Lord, meaning as many as the scripture makes mention of, we are instructed, that we cannot see these works for our erudition, neither yet give the almighty God thanks, except we learn them from one of his books. And here is to be noted, that seeing we are bound to know and be thankful for all the works of God contained in the scripture, we are much in danger, as well for ignorance as unthankfulness, that we know not the principal works of our own creation or redemption. We are therefore admonished to have books to read the works of God, and to be diligent to ask better learned than we are, what God's works mean. As the children by God's law are bound to ask the parents, and the parents bound by the same to teach them: then shall both fathers and children find comfort and consolation against all temptations in the time of trouble and heaviness, (Deut. iv. vi. xxxi.), as we see this man's remedy by the Spirit of God arose from recording, meditating, and speaking of God's word and works.

Here has this prophet marvellously opened, how a man in trouble comes to consolation and comfort. First, that the spirit and heart of man must have such strong faith, as may credit God's power, and also his good will, and believe that God both can and will for his truth's sake help the troubled conscience. Therefore Solomon gives a godly and necessary commandment: "Keep thy heart with all circumspection, for of it proceedeth life." (Prov. iv.) So did David, when the prophet Nathan had made him afraid for the murder of Uriah, and the adultery with Bathsheba, his conscience was in great anguish and fear, and among other things that he prayed for to God, he desired that God would create and make him a new heart

(Psalm li.); that is, to give him such a steadfast and burning faith, that in Christ his sinful heart might be cleansed. And secondly, he prays to have so right and sure a spirit, that should not doubt of God's favour towards him. Thirdly, that God would always preserve his Holy Spirit with the heart regenerated, that from time to time the heart might be ruled in obedience towards God. Fourthly, he prays to be led with a willing spirit, that he may obey God in adversities, quietly and patiently without impatience or grudge against God. And, where this knowledge and feeling of the favour of God is in the spirit, there follows the recording and remembrance of God's works, meditating and thinking upon heavenly things, and the tongue ready also to speak forth the glory of God, to God's honour and praise, and to the edifying of God's people and congregation, after this manner: "Thy way, O God, is in holiness: who is so great a God as God, even our God?" (Ver. 13.)

Here is a consolation very worthy to be learned and received of all troubled men; and it is this, to understand and perceive, that all the doings and acts of almighty God are righteous, although many times the flesh judges, and the tongue speaks the contrary, that God should be too severe, and punish too extremely: as though he did it rather of a desire to punish, than to correct or amend the person punished. As we see by Job's word, that wished his sins laid in one balance, and his punishment in another balance, as though God punished more extremely than justly. (Chap. vi.) The same it seems king David also felt, when he said, "How long, Lord, wilt thou forget me? for ever?" (Psalm xiii.), with like bitter speeches in the scripture, complaining of God's justice, judgment, and severity. The same we read of Jeremiah the prophet: he spake God's word truly, and yet there happened unto him wonderful great adversities, the terror whereof made him curse the day that he was born in. And doubtless, when he said, "Why hast thou deceived me, Lord?" (chap. xx.), he thought God was rather too extreme, than just in his punishment, to afflict him in adversity, and to suffer Pashur the high priest and his enemy to be in quiet and tranquillity.

Asaph was before in great trouble, as you heard, and especially of the mind, that felt not a sure trust and confidence in God's mercy, and thought that of all extremities

a mind desperate and doubtful of God's mercy is the greatest, as it is indeed; yet now he saith, "God is holy in his way, and all that he does is right and just."

We learn hereby, that the pot cannot say to the potter, "Why hast thou made me after this sort?" (Jer. xix. Rom. ix.) Neither may the mortal man, in whom is nothing but sin, quarrel with the Lord, and say, What layest thou upon me? But think, that although he had made us both blind, lame, and as deformed as monsters, yet had he made us better than ever we deserved. And in case he laid all the troubles of the world upon one man, yet are they less than one sin of man deserves. Thus the prophet had learned and felt, and said, "The doings of God are holy and right, and there is none to be compared unto him;" and shows the cause why none is to be compared unto God. In the declaration whereof, he continues for seven verses, and so makes an end of the psalm.

The first cause why he saith none is be compared unto God is this: "Thou art the Lord that doest wonders, and hast declared thy power amongst people." (Verse 14.)

First, he notes generally, that God is the doer of wonders and miracles, and afterwards he shows wherein God has wrought these miracles. Of this we learn three instructions: the one, that some men know generally, that God works all things marvellously; the second, that others know that God works in some men marvellously; the third, that others also know that God works in themselves marvellously.

Of the first sort are such as know by God's works generally, that God hath and doth dispose all things upon the earth, and nothing hath its beginning nor being but of God, of whom St. Paul speaks to the Romans, that by God's works they knew God, and yet glorified him not. (Rom. i.) Of the second sort are such as more particularly know and speak of God's miracles; as such are that read how God of his singular favour preserved Noah and his family, and drowned all the world besides, (Gen. vii.): how he brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, (Exod. xiv.), and delivered the people from the captivity of Babylon, with such-like. And yet when they are in troubles themselves, these marvellous works and mercies, showed unto others, cannot comfort them. Of the third sort are such as know generally the marvellous works of God, and perceive that in some, God is particularly merciful;

and from some he finds in himself singularly the mercy of God; and from the remembrance of God's benefits unto others he finds in himself the working of God's mercy, and finds in his conscience such comfort indeed, that he remembers others before him, that had of God's mercies in their time of troubles.

The most part of men consider generally, that God is the worker of miracles: the common sort of christians consider, that God has wrought miracles particularly upon others; but the true elect and christians indeed, see the miracles of God wrought particularly upon others, and each take consolation of God's mercies themselves. As we see this prophet marvellously declares God's wonders, and puts the general working of God's miracles between a singular working of wonders and a particular working of wonders.

The general expression is this: "Thou art God that doest wonders, and hast declared thy power amongst people." The singularity and particularity of God's working of wonders, one is before, and the other behind. The singularity is in this, that he perceived it was his own infirmity, that made him doubt of God's promises; and yet God's singular grace made him singularly feel and perceive that God singularly would be good unto him. The particularity is in this, that he saith, "With God's right hand God delivered the posterity of Jacob and Joseph from the servitude of Egypt," &c. The way to consider the marvellous works of God is in a profitable consideration and sight of them, as well to know them as to be the better for them: for there is no man who can take advantage or profit by God's goodness showed unto a multitude, except he singularly receive gain thereby himself. As we see, when a whole multitude, almost five thousand people, were fed marvellously with a few loaves and fewer fishes, (John vi.), he taught the consolation and health of man's soul in his own blood; but none was the better for it, but such as believed every man for himself that which Christ spake. The miracles and merciful help of Christ unto others, had not profited the poor woman of Canaan, except she herself had been partaker of the same. (Matt. xv.) And as it is in the works of God which comfort the afflicted man; so is it in the works of God which bring men into heaviness and sorrow for sin.

Generally; the word of God rebukes sin, and calls sin-

ners to repentance; particularly it shows unto us, how David, Peter, Mary Magdalen, and others, repented. But to us those sorrows and repentance do no good, except we every man singularly* repent and are sorrowful for his sins. For it is not another man's sickness that makes me sick, nor another man's health that makes me whole. No more is any other man's repentance my repentance, or any other man's faith my faith. But I must repent, and I must believe myself, to feel sorrowfulness for sin by the law, and remission thereof by faith in Christ: so that every private man must be in repentance, sorry with the true repentant sorrow, and faithful with the true faithful. For as God himself is towards man, so are all his works and promises; for look, to whom God is merciful, to the same are all his promises comfortable; and to whom God is severe and rigorous, to the same God's threatenings are terrible, and his justice fearful. As king David saith, "With the holy thou wilt be holy, and with the innocent thou wilt be innocent; with the chosen thou wilt be chosen, and with the perverse thou wilt be perverse." (Psalm xviii.)

Such as follow virtue and godliness, God increases with gifts and benefits; and such as have wicked manners, and by false doctrine decline from the truth, to those God is severe and sharp. And except such persons repent, God will spoil them from all judgment of truth; and being blind and destitute of knowledge, suffer them to be in the power and dominion of most filthy lusts and abominable desires. So that such as would not love the beauty and excellency of virtue, shall tumble and wallow like swine, in the filth of sin; of which abominations and just judgments of God, St. Paul speaks in the epistle to the Romans; for this is to be noted—look, as every man is, even so he thinks of God. And as the good and godly man thinks well of God, so does the evil and wicked man think evil of God.

Some think that man and all worldly things are ruled and governed by God, with great justice and inscrutable wisdom, with all mercy and favour. Others think that God rules not this world and worldly things; and in case they think he does, yet they condemn his administration and rule as unjust and partial, because God does as it pleases himself, and not as man would have him do. And upon these diversities of judgments in men's minds God

* Individually.

is to the godly merciful; and to the ungodly, severe and rigorous.

If the spirit of man judge truly and godly of him, by and by the spirit of man shall perceive and feel the heavenly influence of God's Spirit stirring and impelling his spirit to all virtue and goodness. If the spirit of man be destitute of the Spirit of God, and judge perversely and wickedly, the spirit of man shall feel that the want of God's Spirit and [true judgment blinds the eyes of his mind, and shall cast himself into all abomination and sin, as the iniquity of man justly has deserved—of which comes, that as the virtue and godliness of godly men daily increase, even so do the iniquity and abomination of the ungodly also increase. And look what place and preeminence God obtains with any man, in the same place and preeminence is the man with God. And such as according to God's word, do godly honour and reverence the almighty God; judging aright of God's might and providence, they give most humble thanks unto the mercy of God, who alone—and none but he—can teach or instruct the mind of man in true knowledge, or incline his will to godly doings, or inflame the soul with all her powers to the desire and fervent love of godliness and virtue. As we see by this prophet Asaph in this place, that as long as his spirit wanted the help of God's Spirit, it judged doubtfully of God's mercy and promises: but when the Spirit of God had exiled and banished doubtfulness, and placed this strong fortress of confidence, "The right hand of God can change this my woful and miserable state," with the judgment and feeling thereof, he was rapt and stricken with a marvellous love of God's wonders, and repeated with great joy and consolation, what God had done generally to all men. After that, what he had done to some particular men and private nations, naming Jacob and Joseph, whose offspring and succession he brought out of the land of Egypt, as follows in the psalm:

Verse 15. "Thou hast mightily delivered thy people, even the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah."

Of this verse we learn two consolations. The one, that every troubled christian may see his elders, and also his betters troubled. Not that it is a comfort to a man that is afflicted to see another in trouble, but to mark that God loved none so well, but in this world he sent trouble unto them, and excepted not his dear Son. Wherefore, it is a

consolation to the afflicted to be made by tribulation like unto the godly fathers, that were before his time, and to remember, that although all christian men are not brought under the captivity of Pharaoh in Egypt, nor under Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, yet there is an Egypt and a Babylon for every christian member. That is to say, the captivity of sin, the bondage of the flesh, the severity of the law, the danger of the world, the enmity of infidels, the treason of dissembling friends, the wickedness of evil and devilish ordinances, the dissimulation of hypocrites, the perjury of inconstant persons, the breach of faithful promises, the inconstancy of the weak, the cruelty of papists, the love of man, and the hatred of God, with many others;—such as the ignorance of God's law, the rebellion of the heart against it, frowardness of the will to consent unto it, diffidence and mistrust of God's mercy, boldness to sin in the time of health, faintness and mistrust of the remission thereof in sickness, love of vice and sin, hatred of virtue and godliness, sudden fallings from grace, slow rising unto it again, unwillingness to die, readiness to live wickedly, sorrowfulness to forsake this world, great delight to use it evil whilst we have it, being loth to seek heavenly things, glad to seek earthly things, not feeling the poverty and trouble of the soul, always grudging at the poverty and trouble of the body, with innumerable other captivities which every christian is entangled with, as every man may judge by his own life.

The next consolation is to see that the truth of God's help promised to all men, when they are troubled, has been declared, opened, and verified in others, in time past. For this is the greatest consolation that can be to any man, in trouble or in sickness, when he is assured of such help and such medicines as never were used, but they helped the afflicted and healed the sick.

Now against all the troubles of man, and also against all the sickness of man, God has promised his present and helping mercy; which medicine and help never failed, but helped as many as put their trust therein. Therefore Asaph establishes and assures himself of God's help against his grievous temptations and troubles which he suffered, by recording that his griefs were no greater, nor his troubles more dangerous, than Jacob's, Joseph's, and their posterity's, nor yet so grievous; insomuch that, seeing the mercy of God could help the greater troubles in

his predecessors, he could help and ease the lesser in him that was then troubled. And being so assured of God's help he spake at the end of this verse, "Selah." As though he had said, It is most true that God can help and comfort me, as he helped and comforted my forefathers. And for the better consolation and more firm assurance, he shows how marvellously he did help the posterity of Jacob and Joseph.

Verse 16. "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid; the depths also were troubled."

In that he saith, The waters were afraid, when they saw God: first, the manner of speech in the scripture is to be noted, which attributes unto insensible things sensible qualities, as in this place, sight and fear are attributed unto the water, whereas, indeed, properly the water cannot see nor fear. But when the scripture uses any such phrase or speech, there are to be marked divers doctrines of edifying. First of God; then, insensible creatures; and thirdly, man, for whose sake the scripture sometimes speaks unto insensible creatures, as though they were sensible, and works miracles in them, for the instruction and amendment of sensible and reasonable man.

The learning* touching God is, that he works his will, and uses his creatures, as it seems unto his inscrutable wisdom most proper and convenient; as here he troubles and alters the condition of the seas and waters. These waters were appointed by God, in the third day of the creation, to be in one place, and were called the sea, a pleasant element, and a beautiful thing to behold; and God said, It was good, (Gen. i.) as the effect thereof shows indeed; for it nourishes the earth with necessary moisture, by private veins and secret passages secretly passing through the earth. And when the floods that moisten the earth have done their office, they return into their old lodging, the sea, again, from whence rise the showers and rain to moisture from above, that floods beneath cannot be conveyed unto. And it serves for transporting the necessaries of one realm to the other, suffering the ships to pass with great gain and pleasure.

These and many more advantages God works by this insensible creature, when it is calm and navigable; but when he moves it with his winds and tempests, it is so horrible in itself, that no man may, without peril and death, travel on it, so raging and fearful is that pleasant

* Instruction.

element of the water, when God moves it. It has, by God's appointment, its time of calm, and time of storm; time to profit men, and time to undo men; time to be a refuge for men in the days of peril, and time to be a grave and sepulchre for men; time to conjoin strange nations together, and time to separate them again, as it pleases the Creator, almighty God, to appoint and direct it.

The learning that concerns the insensible creature itself is, that it can be no longer calm, nor any longer troubled, than it pleases the heavenly Governor to dispose it to be so. And here is to be noted against such men as attribute storms and calms to fortune; whereas, only the voice of the Lord moves tempests and sends fair weather. (Psalm xxix.) It is also a doctrine against all men, that think the waters and seas may be moved, and cease, at their own pleasure; which is contrary to this prophet's doctrine, who saith, "The waters saw the Lord, and were afraid." So that their trouble rises from the commandment of the Lord, and they cannot do what they lust, but what God biddeth them to do. It is godly set forth afterwards in another psalm, (cxiv.) wherein the passage of the children of Israel is mentioned, as it is in this.

The doctrine touching man in this verse is a declaration of man's obstinacy and stubbornness. The insensible creature, the waters, that lack both life and reason, at every commandment, are as the Lord their Maker commands them to be. With every tempest they are troubled, and with every calm they are so plain and quiet, that it seems rather a stablished land, than a variable sea. But let God send his word unto man, and the contents thereof threaten the tempest of all tempests, eternal death, hell fire, and God's everlasting displeasure; yet man will not hear nor see them, nor yet be moved at all; or let God gently and favourably offer his mercies unto man, and by his word exhort him ever so much to repentance, it is for the most part in vain. Therefore, God, by his prophets Moses and Isaiah, called heaven and earth to witness against man's stubbornness and hardness of heart. (Deut. xxxii. Isa. i.)

There is also this doctrine to be learned from this trouble of the water, how to receive consolation, and how to learn fear—by the creatures of God that bear no life, and yet are thus troubled. Consolation in this sort, when the penitent man that suffers affliction and trouble, sees

insensible things moved and unquieted that never offended, he shall the less wonder at his own trouble. When he sees that a sinner and a wretched offender of God is punished, he shall learn fear. When he sees that God, for the sin of man, punishes his creatures that never offended, what punishment is man worthy to have, that is nothing but sin itself? And what fear should this bring into christian men's consciences, to know that no creature deserves punishment, no creature disobeys God, but the devil and man? Oh! what man or woman can with faith look upon the least flowers of the field, and not hate himself? In summer-time, when men see the meadows and gardens so marvellously apparelled with flowers of every colour, so that they shall not be able to discern whether their beauty better please the eye, or their sweet savour the smell, what may they learn, in thinking of themselves, as the truth is, that there is nothing in them but filth and sin, that are most heinously offensive before the face of God? And when man shall perceive that flowers which never transgressed, fade, and lose both beauty to the eye, and sweet savour to the smell, what may miserable man think he is worthy to lose, who is nothing but sin, and ever offends? Again, when man shall perceive that God thus marvellously, after long winter and great storms, raises out of the vile earth such beautiful flowers, plants, and trees, what consolation may the man take, that has his faith in Christ—to think that all his sins be forgiven in his precious blood, and that after long persecution and cruel death, he shall come to eternal life. After this manner did the prophet consider the works of God, and the troubles of his creatures, and received great consolation thereby.

In the end of this verse the prophet saith, "The depths were troubled." In which words he has aptly showed the mighty power of God, and perceives how the record of God's fact may be his consolation. In that he saith, "The depths were troubled," there are divers things to be understood. If he mean of the seas, when they are troublesome and tempestuous by foul weather, he speaks rather according to the judgment of such as suffer the trouble and peril of the waves, and think that at one time they fall to the bottom of the sea, and at another time they are rather upon high mountains than upon the waters, the rages thereof are so extreme: yet, indeed, the bottom of the sea is not felt, neither does the ship that is saved

descend so far; but the tempests are so sore, that it seems to the sufferers thereof that no extremity can be greater. In this sense it serves marvellously the prophet's purpose; for as they that endure the tempest of the sea, think there could be no extremity greater than that which they sustain, so do they that for a time suffer the tempest of mistrust and despair of the conscience, think they could endure no more extremity of conscience. Whereas, indeed, if God should suffer them to feel the extremity, it were eternal death, as the extremity of the sea in tempests is shipwreck and loss of men and goods. But if it be understood as it stands in the letter, then the prophet refers to the mighty hand of God, that divided the Red Sea even unto the very bottom, and also the water of Jordan, that his people might have both a nigh way, a safe way, and a glorious way, towards the land which the Lord had promised them. (Exod. xiv. Joshua iii.) And then in this sense we learn, that although water and wind, with all other troubles, cover the face of the earth, as if it were in the bottom of the sea, and were not possible to come to the use of man, even so the troublesome temptations and great terror of God's wrath against sin cover the soul of man, that, according to the judgment of the flesh, it shall never come to have the use and enjoyment of God's holy favour again.

But now, as we see by a miracle, God makes dry the depth of horrible seas, and turns the bottom of them to the use of man, so does he, in the blood of Christ, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, dry up and quite lade out the ponds and deep seas of mistrust and heaviness out of the soul, and turns the soul itself to the use of his own honour, in joys everlasting. And as the water covers the beauty of the land, so do sin and temptation cover the image and beauty of man's soul in this life. But as with a word God can remedy the one, so with the least of his mercies he can redress the other. And for the better experience and more certainty thereof, we see it proved by Asaph in this place. For the ground was never more overwhelmed with water, nor the bright sun with dim clouds, than was this poor prophet's spirit with heaviness and sorrow of sin and temptations. Therefore he feels how God eases the heart, and records how he banished floods and waters, to make his people a way to rest and tranquillity.

Verse 17. "The clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad."

The prophet remembers the marvellous inundation and drowning of the world in the days of Noah, which drowned all the world for sin, saving such as were in the ark or ship with Noah. And he remembers also the horrible thunder that was heard by the people, when God gave his law unto them upon mount Sinai. Likewise, he calls to remembrance the plagues of Egypt, wherewithal God punished Pharaoh, his people, and the whole land; (Gen. vii. Exod. xix.) which pains and plagues he calleth, after the phrase of scripture, "arrows and darts." (Exodus v. vi. vii. viii. ix. x. xi.) These remembrances may be comforts to the hearers and to the readers two ways. First in this, that God, when he punishes, punishes justly, as he did the whole world for sin: whereof the prophet gathers, "If sin justly merited, do trouble all the generation of man, it is no great marvel, though sin trouble me, who am but one man, and a vile sinner. If sin brought all flesh unto death, saving those that were in the ship, is it any marvel, though sin make me to tremble and quake? Again, if God, when he gave the law to Moses and to the people, spake out of thunder, declaring what a thing it was to transgress that law, insomuch that all the people were afraid to hear the Lord speak, and desired that Moses might supply his place; (Exod. xx.) what marvel is it that my conscience trembles, feeling that my soul has offended the laws of God? And if Pharaoh and his realm were sore afraid of God's outward plagues, what cause have I to fear the inward dread and sorrowful sight of sin, showed unto me by God's law! So that we may take this consolation out of this place—that God is a just Judge to punish sin, and not a tyrant, that punishes for affection or wilful desire. And so said David, "Whensoever or howsoever thou punish, let men say and judge as they list, thou art just, and righteous are all thy doings." (Psalm li. x. cxxx.)

The other consolation is, that in the midst of all adversities, God preserved penitent and faithful sinners; as in the time of the universal flood, the water hurt not Noah, nor such as were in the ship. In the time of Pharaoh's plagues, the Israelites took no harm. At the giving of the law, the Israelites perished not with lightning and thunder. Even so, sorrows and anguish, diffidence and weakness of

faith, are plagues and punishments for all men by reason of sin; yet penitent sinners, by reason of faith in Christ, take no hurt nor condemnation by them, as appears by this prophet, who was troubled in the spirit and in the body, as marvellously as could be, but yet in Christ escaped the danger, as all men shall do that repent and believe. (Rom. viii.) Whereof we learn, that as the rain falls generally, and yet betters no earth to bring forth her fruit, but such as is apt to receive the rain, stony rocks and barren ground being nothing the better; even so, the plagues and rain of God's displeasure plague all mankind, but none are the better therefore, but such as repent and bewail their sins, which gave God just occasion thus to punish them. (Heb. vi. x.) The same is to be considered also of the verse that follows, which is this:

Verse 18. "The lightning shone upon the ground, the earth was moved, and shook therewithal."

By these manner of speeches, "The lightning shone, and the earth quaked," the prophet sets forth the strength and might of God's power, and would have men to love him and to fear him; for he is able to defend and preserve his faithful, and to punish and plague the wicked. And the like he saith in the verse following.

Verse 19. "Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the deep waters; and thy footsteps are not known."

He takes comfort of this miracle, that God brought the Israelites through the Red Sea, in that the waters knew the Israelites, and gave place unto them, that they might go through them dry-footed. But when king Pharaoh and his people would have followed in the same path, and persecuted God's people, the sea would make no way for him, nor yet show the steps where the Israelites trod, but overwhelmed them in most desperate deaths. So in the seas of temptations, such as put their trust in the Lord, pass, and never perish by them. (Psa. cxxi. cxxv. xiii. xlvi. liv. lxxi.) Whereas, such as put not their trust in the Lord, perish in temptations, as Pharaoh and his army did by water. (Exod. xiv.) And the next verse that concludes the psalm shows by what means the Israelites were, under God, saved in the Red Sea, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, as it appeared.

Verse 20. "Thou leddest thy people like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

From this verse the afflicted may learn many consolations.

First, that the best people are no better able to resist temptations,* than the simple sheep is able to withstand the brier that catches him. The next, that man is of no more ability to beware of temptations,* than the poor sheep is to avoid the brier, being preserved only by the diligence of the shepherd. The third, that as the shepherd is careful of his entangled and briered sheep, so is God of his afflicted faithful people. And the fourth is, that the people of Israel could take no harm from the water, because they entered the sea at God's commandment. Whereof we learn, that no danger can hurt, when God commands us to enter into it, and all dangers overcome us, if we choose them ourselves, without God's commandment. As Peter, when he went at God's commandment upon the water, took no hurt; (Matt. xiv.) but when he entered into the high-priest's house, upon his own presumption, he was overcome, and denied Christ. The Israelites, when they fought at God's commandment, the peril was nothing; but when they would do it of their own heads, they perished. (Numb. xiv.) So that we are bound to attend upon God's commandment, and then no danger shall destroy us, though it pain us.

The other doctrine is in this, that God used the ministry of Moses and Aaron in the deliverance of his people, who commanded them to do nothing but what the Lord first bade. Whereof we learn, that such as are ministers appointed of God, and do nothing but as God commands, are to be followed, as St. Paul saith, "Follow me, as I follow Christ." (1 Cor. xv. xi.) And these men can by the word of God give good counsel and great consolation, both for body and soul; as we perceive this prophet, in marking God's doings unto the Israelites, applied by grace the same wisdom and helping mercy unto himself, to his eternal rest through Jesus Christ in the world to come. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all laud and praise world without end. Let all christians say, Amen.

* The word temptations is frequently used for 'trials.

EXTRACTS

FROM

A BRIEF AND CLEAR CONFESSION

OF

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

CONTAINED IN AN HUNDRED ARTICLES ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF THE APOSTLES' CREED,* WRITTEN BY THAT LEARNED AND GODLY MARTYR

JOHN HOOPER.

VII. I BELIEVE, that man was ordained of the Lord God a master and ruler over all his creatures: which thing he hath lost through his sin, as well for his own part, as also for all his posterity: which rule and lordship, I believe, doth chiefly appertain unto Jesus Christ, verily God and man, and to those unto whom he will communicate the same, as unto his own faithful, and not unto the infidels and damned.

IX. I believe, that the disorder and corruption of nature was not only in Adam, because of his sin, but is also in all men generally, which come of him, Jesus Christ only excepted: and that in such sort, that all men after their own nature are corrupt, unjust, liars, ignorant, unkind, and imperfect in all things, and have no power of their own nature to do, think, speak, or will any thing that may please God; until they are regenerated and renewed by the Spirit of the Lord.

X. I believe, that this corruption of nature, otherwise called original sin, is the fountain and root of all other sins—for which all the miseries and adversities that we endure in this present life, as well in body as soul, do come unto us; yea, and in the end double death, that is to say, both of body and soul. These are the fruits and rewards of sin. But although the same are due and common to all men generally, nevertheless, the Lord through his mercy

* Having already inserted a confession of faith by bishop Hooper at length, only extracts from this second confession, which was a posthumous publication, are given in this collection.

hath reserved to himself a certain number (which are only known to himself,) which he hath drawn from this corrupt heap, and hath sanctified and cleansed the same in the blood of his Son Jesus Christ, and by means thereof hath made them vessels of election and honour, apt unto all good works.

XIV. I believe and confess Jesus Christ to be the fulness, the end, and accomplishment of the law, to the justification of all that believe, through whom and by whom only, all the promises of the Father are accomplished, yea even to the uttermost. Who also alone hath perfectly satisfied the law in that which no other amongst men could perform; as the law doth command things impossible, which nevertheless man must accomplish, not by working, but through believing. For so is the law accomplished through faith, and not through works; and by this means shall man find the righteousness of faith to be available before the Lord, and not the righteousness of works, which leadeth nothing unto perfection.

XX. I believe, that the same Jesus Christ is verily Christ; that is to say, the Messiah anointed by the Holy Ghost, because he was the very King, the Prophet, and great Sacrificer, that should sacrifice for all that believe: which also is promised in the law, and is the same of whom all the prophets have spoken. This anointing of Christ is not corporeal, of a material and visible oil, as was that of the kings, priests, and prophets in times past: but it is spiritual, of an invisible oil, which is the grace and gifts of the Holy Ghost, wherewith he is replenished above all others. So that this anointing is descended even unto us, who have felt and proved the sweetness thereof: and by it also we bear the name of christians, that is to say, 'anointed.'

XXI. I believe, that this sacrificing of Jesus Christ was not levitical or carnal, to immolate, offer up, and to sacrifice beasts, kine, and other sensible things, as Aaron and his successors did; but spiritual, to offer and sacrifice himself, that is to say, his body and blood, for the remission of the sins of the whole world. Even as likewise his kingdom is not of this world, carnal, but spiritual; which consists in the guiding and governing of his own by his Holy Spirit, over whom he reigneth by his word, and that for the destruction of all his adversaries, which are sin, death, hell, Satan, and all infidels, wicked, and reprobate.

XXV. I believe, that all this (the sufferings of Christ)

was done, not for himself, who never committed sin, in whose mouth was never found deceit nor lie; but for the love of us poor and miserable sinners, whose place he occupied upon the cross, as a pledge, or as one that represented the person of all the sinners that ever were, now are, or shall be, unto the world's end. And because they through their sins have deserved to feel and taste of the extreme pains of death, to be forsaken of God and of all creatures, and to feel the wrath and severe judgment of God upon them; Christ, who was their pledge, satisfying for them upon the cross, hath felt and endured all the same, and that altogether to make us free, to deliver us from all these pains, from the wrath and judgment of God, from condemnation and eternal death.

XXVI. I believe and consider this death and passion, even as I do all other mysteries of Jesus Christ, not only as touching the history, as a pattern and example to follow, as was that of the holy men and women who are dead for the Lord's cause: but also principally as touching the cause, fruits, and uses thereof; thereby to know the greatness of my sins, the grace and mercy of the Father, and the charity* of the Son, by whom we are reconciled unto God, delivered from the tyranny of the devil, and restored to the liberty of the Spirit. This is the glass without spot, to teach us to know our filthiness, the laver or clear fountain to wash and cleanse us, the infinite treasure to satisfy all our creditors: of whom and by whom only, the divine justice is fully satisfied for all the sins of all that have been, be now, or shall be, unto the end of the world. And therefore I do believe and confess, that Christ's condemnation is mine absolution; that his crucifying is my deliverance; his descending into hell is mine ascending into heaven; his death is my life; his blood is my cleansing, by whom only I am washed, purified, and cleansed from all my sins. So that I neither receive, neither believe any other purgatory, either in this world or in the other, whereby I may be cleansed, but only the blood of Jesus Christ, by which all are purged and made clean for ever.

XXVII. I believe, that Jesus Christ, by the sacrifice of his body, which he offered upon the tree of the cross, hath defaced and destroyed sin, death and the devil, with all his kingdom; and hath wholly performed the work of our

* Love.

salvation, and hath abolished and made an end of all other sacrifices. So that from thenceforth there is no other propitiatory sacrifice, either for the living or the dead, to be looked for or sought for, than the same. For by this one only oblation hath he consecrated for ever all those that are sanctified.

XLII. I believe, that the Holy Ghost is a divine person, distinct from the Father and the Son, proceeding from them both, in and through all things equal and coeternal with them; by which Holy Ghost the church hath always been, is now, and shall be ruled, guided, directed, and governed unto the end of the world. By whom also all the saints, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ have spoken. And therefore I do neither believe nor receive any other vicar or lieutenant to Christ upon earth within his church, than the Holy Ghost, who cannot be received of the wicked.

XLIII. I believe, that the Holy Ghost is the pledge and earnest of our heavenly heritage, by which we are assured, ascertained, and certainly persuaded in our consciences that we are the children of God, and brethren adoptives to Jesus Christ, and consequently coheirs of eternal life. The same Holy Ghost also is the finger of God, which imprinteth in our hearts and spirits the faith of these things aforesaid. He sealeth and confirmeth the promises of the Lord within our hearts through his goodness and grace, because we should in no wise doubt.

XLIV. I believe, that this Holy Spirit, dwelling in us through his grace and virtue, doth regenerate us into a newness and change of living, mortifying in us all that is of us and of the old man, of the flesh and of the world, and quickening all that is his in us. So that we live not thenceforth after our own lusts, but according to the will of God; which Holy Ghost also worketh in us all good works, and doth reprove, rebuke, and condemn the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment.

XLV. I believe, that the Holy Ghost is the teacher of the ignorant; who teacheth, guideth, and leadeth us unto the knowledge of the truth; and by him only are we brought and delivered out of the darkness, and set in the perfect light. Likewise I believe, that he is the comforter of the poor, afflicted, and persecuted; and in all their troubles, vexations, and adversities, doth so help, strengthen, comfort, and assist all such, that he will not suffer them

to despair, as the wicked and reprobate do, but makes them to taste and feel the sweetness, goodness, and mercy of God the Father, which by persecution and divers tribulations leadeth his own unto eternal glory.

XLVII. I believe and confess one only catholic and universal church, which is a holy congregation and assembly of all faithful believers, which are chosen and predestinate unto everlasting life, before the foundations of the world were laid; of whose number I count myself, and believe that I am, through the only grace and mercy of the Father, and by the merits of my good Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and not by means of my good works and merits, which indeed are none.

XLVIII. I believe, that this church is invisible to the eye of man, and is only known to God, and that the same church is not set, compassed, and limited within a certain place or bounds, but is scattered and spread abroad, throughout all the world; but yet coupled together in heart, will, and spirit, by the bond of faith and charity, having and altogether acknowledging one only God, one only head and mediator Jesus Christ, one faith, one law, one baptism, one spiritual table, wherein one meat and one spiritual drink is ministered unto them, unto the end of the world. This church contains in it all the righteous and chosen people, from the first righteous man unto the last that shall be found righteous in the end of the world: and therefore I call it universal. For, as touching the visible church, which is the congregation of the good and of the wicked, of the chosen and of the reprobate, and generally of all those which say they believe in Christ, I do not believe that to be the church, because that church is seen of the eye, and the faith thereof is in visible things.

LIV. I believe, that the word of God is of a far greater authority than the church; which word alone sufficiently shows and teaches us all those things that in anywise concern our salvation; both what we ought to do, and what to leave undone. The same word of God is the true pattern and perfect rule, after which all faithful people ought to govern and order their lives, without turning either to the right hand or to the left hand, without changing anything thereof, without putting to it, or taking from it, knowing that all the works of God are perfect, but most chiefly his word.

LV. I believe, that as Jesus Christ alone amongst all

men is holy and true, and that all others are sinners and liars; even so, likewise, the doctrine of the same Jesus Christ alone is holy and true, and all other doctrines are impure and false. This doctrine of Jesus Christ is a well, a fountain of life, a lamp, or pillar of fire to guide us, the bread of the soul, and the power of God unto salvation, to all that believe. And, therefore, whatsoever happens, the same only ought to be advanced, preached, heard, understood, and received of all the world, to the comfort and salvation of those that believe, and to the greater damnation of the unbelievers, the wicked, and reprobate, that believe not. For, as the manna in the desert was to some sour, and to other some a good and pleasant meat; and as Christ is to some a stumbling-stone to be offended at, and is appointed for the fall of the wicked, and the rising up of the godly: even so the word of the gospel to some is a savour of death unto death, and to other some a savour of life unto life. The which word of the gospel I receive and take to be my only guide, according to the same to die and to live.

LVI. I believe, that the reading of the same word and gospel ought not, neither can it be prohibited and forbidden from any manner of person, what estate, sort, or condition soever the same are of; but it ought to be common unto all the world, as well to men as women; yea, and that in a vulgar or common language, which all do understand, because it is ordained and appointed for all. And, likewise, the promises of God, which are therein contained, do appertain unto all. And, therefore, antichrist and his members do exercise great and cruel tyranny upon the faithful children of God, as well in that they take from them and utterly do forbid them to read the same word, and instead thereof set before them dreams, lies, canons, and damnable traditions; as, also, because upon pain of deadly sin and eternal damnation they both forbid and command things that, indeed, are but indifferent, which manner of theirs is the only note and mark to know antichrist by.

LXXXVIII. I believe, that all those that are come and shall come of the race and line of Adam, generally, are conceived and born in iniquity and corruption, (except Jesus Christ only,) and that they are all sinners, transgressors, and breakers of the law and will of the Lord; and according to their nature they are corrupt, the

children of wrath, worthy of God's judgment, of condemnation, and eternal death, all needing the grace and mercy of God and of Christ's blood-shedding. For God hath wrapped all under sin, to the intent he would have mercy upon all through Jesus Christ our Lord.

LXXXIX. I believe, that the knowledge of sin proceedeth of the law, but the remission and forgiveness of sin cometh of the gospel, and is given us only by the grace and mercy of God in the blood of Jesus Christ, through the faith we have therein; whereby we are counted righteous before God, not through our good works or deservings, neither by the merits of any other creature, either in heaven or in earth. For I know not, neither do I allow any other merits, but the merits of my good Lord, Master, and only Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath merited and sufficiently satisfied for us, and hath paid for his own their debt, in wiping out the handwriting and obligation which was against us; and in taking the same from us, hath fastened it unto the cross.

XC. I believe, that this justifying faith is a mere and singular gift of God, which is commonly given by the hearing of God's word, whereupon alone it is built, and not upon the doctrines and traditions of men. I call a justifying faith a certain assurance and earnest persuasion of the goodwill, love, grace, bounteousness, and mercy of God towards us, whereby we are assured and verily persuaded in our hearts of the mercy, favour, and goodwill of God the Father; that he is on our side, and for us, against all that are against us, and that he will be a merciful Father unto us, pardoning our sins, and will give us his grace, make us his children by adoption, and admit us for heirs unto eternal life; and all this freely in his Son, and by his only Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and not for our merits or good works. This faith can do all things, and to it nothing is impossible; which faith is never perfect nor great enough in us, and therefore ought we always to pray with the apostles, saying, Lord, increase our faith, help our unbelief. For that faith only doth comfort us, makes us holy, and makes us righteous and acceptable before the Lord; it declares us to be the children of God and heirs of eternal life: which faith, also, is the mother, the spring, and root of all good works, like as infidelity is the fountain and root of all wickedness.

XCI. I believe, also, that good works are not superfluous,

vain, and unprofitable, but necessary to salvation. I call good works, not those that are done after the fantasy or commandment of men, but only those that God by his word has commanded to be done; which ought to be done, not to deserve or merit anything thereby at God's hand, or by the same to escape eternal condemnation; but only because God hath commanded them, and that they may testify the love that we have unto our Lord, and our obedience to his holy word and commandment; and to the intent that in us and by us he might be glorified, and that our neighbours, as well the infidels and unbelievers as the faithful, might thereby be edified. And, in like manner, they are to show and to manifest the faith that we have in God and in his word, as the good tree shows itself, and is known by its fruit. Yea, and they are to make sure and certain unto us our calling, election, and predestination. To these ends all the good works commanded by God serve: and whosoever doeth them for any other end, doth misuse them, sinneth, and doeth injury to the blood of Christ, and dishonoureth God and his word, for in so doing he declareth Christ died in vain.

XCII. I believe, that there is none, either in this world or in the other world, either in heaven or in earth, which can forgive me and pardon my sins, but only God; who hath given power and authority to the ministers of his word, to declare to all faithful believers, which are of a contrite heart, and are truly penitent, that all their sins, through the free mercy of God, are forgiven them through the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for them. Yea, to declare unto them that they are pardoned of their sins; and that the same is done by the ministry of the word of the holy church, in the which this remission is exhibited and given, and not otherwise. But on our part is required perfect repentance, which hath two parts; the first is contrition, that is to say, the acknowledging, hating, and abhorring of sin; which is administered by the law, and brings us to despair, if on the contrary we be not helped with a lively faith and the mercy of God the Father through the blood of Jesus Christ, which proceedeth out of the gospel. This faith comforts us, makes us steadfast, and causes us to find favour before the judgment-seat of God.

LETTERS

OF

JOHN HOOPER,

BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER,

Where, after his long and cruel imprisonment, he was burned with most terrible kinds of torments, for the defence of the sincere truth of the gospel, the ninth day of February, in the year of our Lord, 1555.

LETTERS.

LETTER I.

An exhortation to patience, sent to his godly wife, Ann Hooper : whereby all the true members of Christ may take comfort and courage, to suffer trouble and affliction for the profession of his holy gospel.*

Dearly beloved, and my godly wife, Our Saviour Jesus Christ, in St. Matthew's gospel, said to his disciples, that it was necessary slanders† should come: and that he perceived they could not be avoided, as well by the condition of those that should perish and be lost for ever in the world to come, as also by their afflictions who should be saved. For he saw that the great part of the people would contemn and neglect whatsoever true doctrine or godly ways should be showed unto them, or else receive and use it as they thought good to serve their pleasures, without any profit to their souls at all, not caring whether they lived as they were commanded by God's word or not; but would think it sufficient to be counted to have the name of a christian man, with such works and fruits of his profession and christianity, as his fathers and elders, after their custom and manner, esteemed and took to be good fruits and faithful works, and will not try them by the word of God at all.

These men, by the just judgment of God, are delivered unto the craft and subtlety of the devil, that they may be kept by one slanderous stumbling-block or other, that they never come unto Christ, who came to save those that were lost. As you may see how God delivers wicked men up unto their own lusts, to do one mischief after another, careless until they come into a reprobate mind, that forgets itself, and cannot know what is expedient to be

* The wife of bishop Hooper was a native of Burgundy; he married her while at Zurich.

† Scandals, offences.

done, or to be left undone, because they close their eyes, and will not see the light of God's word offered unto them; and being thus blinded, they prefer their own vanities before the truth of God's word. Where such corrupt minds are, there is also corrupt election and choice of God's honour: so that the mind of man takes falsehood for truth, superstition for true religion, death for life, damnation for salvation, hell for heaven, and persecution of Christ's members for God's service and honour.

And as these men wilfully and voluntarily reject the word of God, even so God most justly delivers them unto blindness of mind and hardness of heart, that they cannot understand, nor yet consent to any thing that God would have preached, and set forth to his glory, according to his own will and word: wherefore they hate it mortally, and of all things most detest God's holy word. And as the devil has entered into their hearts, so that they themselves cannot, and will not come to Christ to be instructed by his holy word: even so they cannot abide any other man should be a christian man, and lead his life after the word of God, but they hate him, persecute him, rob him, imprison him, yea, and kill him, whether he be man or woman, if God suffer it. And so much are these wicked men blinded, that they care for no law, whether it be God's or man's, but persecute such as never offended, yea, do evil to those that daily have prayed for them, and wish them God's grace.

In their Pharaonical and blind fury they have no respect to nature. For the brother persecutes the brother, the father the son; and most dear friends, in devilish slander and offence, are become most mortal enemies. And no marvel; for when they had chosen sundry masters, the one the devil, the other God; the one shall agree with the other, as God and the devil agree between themselves. For this cause, that the more part of the world choose to serve the devil under cloaked hypocrisy of God's title, Christ said, "It is expedient and necessary that scandals should come," and many means are devised to keep the little babes of Christ from the heavenly Father. But Christ saith, "Wo be unto him by whom the offence cometh:" yet there is no remedy, man being of such corruption and hatred towards God, but that the evil shall be deceived, and persecute the good; and the good shall understand the truth, and suffer persecution for it until

the world's end. For as he that was born after the flesh, persecuted in times past him that was born after the Spirit; even so it is now.

Therefore forasmuch as we live in this life amongst so many great perils and dangers, we must be well assured by God's word how to bear them, and how to take them patiently, as they are sent to us from God. We must also assure ourselves, that there is no other remedy for christians in the time of trouble, than Christ himself hath appointed us. In St. Luke he gives us this commandment, "Ye shall possess your lives in patience." In which words he gives us both commandment what to do, and also great comfort and consolation in all troubles. He shows also what is to be done, and what is to be hoped for in troubles: and when troubles happen, he bids us to be patient, and in no case violently nor seditiously to resist our persecutors. Because God has such care and charge of us, that he will keep us in the midst of all troubles, even the very hairs of our heads, so that one of them shall not fall away without the will and pleasure of our heavenly Father. Whether the hair therefore tarry on the head, or fall from the head, it is the will of the Father. And seeing he has such care for the hairs of our heads, how much more does he care for our life itself?

Wherefore let God's adversaries do what they lust, whether they take life, or take it not, they can do us no hurt; for their cruelty has no further power than God permits them, and that which comes unto us by the will of our heavenly Father can be no harm, no loss, nor destruction unto us, but rather gain, wealth, and felicity. For all troubles and adversities, that chance to such as are of God, by the will of the heavenly Father, can be none other but gain and advantage.

That the spirit of man may feel these consolations, the Giver of them, the heavenly Father, must be prayed unto for the merits of Christ's passion. For the nature of man cannot be contented, until it be regenerated and possessed with God's Spirit, to bear patiently the troubles of the mind or the body. When the mind and heart of a man sees on every side sorrow and heaviness, and the worldly eye beholds nothing but such things as are troublous and wholly bent to rob the poor of that which he hath, and also to take from him his life: except the man weigh these brittle and uncertain treasures that are taken from him,

with the riches of the life to come, and this life of the body with the life in Christ's precious blood, and so for the love and certainty of the heavenly joys contemns all things present, doubtless he shall never be able to bear the loss of goods, life, or any other things of this world.

Therefore St. Paul gives a very godly and necessary lesson to all men in this short and transitory life, and therein shows how a man may best bear the iniquity and troubles of this world: "If ye be risen again with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God the Father." Wherefore the christian man's faith must be always upon the resurrection of Christ when he is in trouble; and in that glorious resurrection he shall not only see continual and perpetual joy and consolation, but also the victory and triumph over all persecution, trouble, sin, death, hell, the devil, and all other tyrants and persecutors of Christ and of Christ's people; the tears and weepings of the faithful dried up, their wounds healed, their bodies made immortal in joy, their souls for ever praising the Lord, and conjunction and society everlasting with the blessed company of God's elect in perpetual joy. But the words of St. Paul in that place, if they are not marked, shall little profit the reader or hearer, and will give him no patience at all in this impatient and cruel world.

In the first part St. Paul commands us, to think or to set our affections on things that are above. When he bids us seek the things that are above, he requires that our minds never cease from prayer and study in God's word, until we see, know, and understand the vanities of this world, the shortness and misery of this life, and the treasures of the world to come, the immortality thereof, and the joys of that life; and so never cease seeking, until such time as we know certainly and are persuaded what a blessed man he is that seeks the one and finds it, and cares not for the other though he lose it. And in seeking, to have right judgment between the life present and the life to come, we shall find how little the pains, imprisonments, slanders, lies, and death itself is in this world, in respect of pains everlasting, the prison infernal, and dungeon of hell, the sentence of God's just judgment, and everlasting death.

When a man has, by seeking the word of God, found out what the things above are; then must he, as St. Paul

saith, set his affections upon them. And this commandment is more hard than the other. For man's knowledge many times sees the best, and knows that there is a life to come, better than this present life, as you may daily see how men and women can praise and commend, yea, and wish for heaven, and to be at rest there. Yet they set not their affections upon it; they more affect and love a trifle of nothing in this world that pleases their affections, than the treasure of all treasures in heaven, which their own judgment saith is better than all worldly things. Wherefore we must set our affections upon the things that are above; that is to say, when any thing worse than heaven, upon the earth, offers itself to be ours, if we will give our good wills to it, and love it in our hearts; then ought we to see by the judgment of God's word, whether we may have the world without offence of God, and such things as are for this worldly life without his displeasure. If we cannot, St. Paul's commandment must take place, "Set your affection on things that are above."

If the riches of this world may not be gotten nor kept with God's law, neither our lives be continued without the denial of his honour, we must set our affections upon the riches and life that is above, and not upon things that are on the earth. Therefore this second commandment of St. Paul requires, that as our minds judge heavenly things to be better than things upon the earth, and the life to come better than the life present; so we should choose them before others, and prefer them, and have such affection to the best, that in no case we set the worst before it, as the most part of the world doth and hath done, for they choose the best and approve it, and yet follow the worst.

But these things, my godly wife, require rather cogitation, meditation, and prayer, than words or talk. They are easy to be spoken of, but not so easy to be used and practised. Wherefore, seeing they are God's gifts, and none of ours, to have as our own when we would, we must seek them at our heavenly Father's hand, who seeth and knoweth how poor and wretched we are, and how naked, how spoiled, and destitute of all his blessed gifts we are by reason of sin. He commanded therefore his disciples, when he showed them that they should take patiently the state of this present life, full of troubles and persecution, to pray that they might well escape those troubles that were to come, and be able to stand before the

Son of man. When you find yourself too much oppressed, as every man shall be sometimes with the fear of God's judgment, use the seventy-seventh psalm which begins, "I will cry unto God with my voice, and he shall hearken unto me." In which psalm is both godly doctrine and great consolation unto the man or woman that is in anguish of mind.

Use also in such trouble the eighty-eighth psalm, wherein is contained the prayer of a man who was brought into extreme anguish and misery, and being vexed with adversaries and persecutions, saw nothing but death and hell. And although he felt in himself, that he had not only man, but also God angry towards him; yet he by prayer humbly resorted unto God, as the only port of consolation, and in the midst of his desperate state of trouble put the hope of his salvation in him, whom he felt to be his enemy. Howbeit no man of himself can do this, but the Spirit of God, that strikes the man's heart with fear, prays for the man stricken and feared,* with unspeakable groanings. And when you feel yourself or know any other to be oppressed after such sort, be glad: for after God has made you know what you are, of yourself, he will doubtless show you comfort, and declare unto you what you are, in Christ his only Son; and use prayer often, for that is the means whereby God will be sought unto for his gifts.

These psalms are for the purpose, when the mind can take no understanding, nor the heart any joy of God's promises: and therefore were these psalms also made, vi. xxii. xxx. xxxi. xxxviii. and lxix.; from which you shall learn both patience and consolation.

Remember, that although your life, as all christian men's life is, be hid, and what it is appears not, yet "it is safe," as St. Paul saith, "with God in Christ; and when Christ shall appear, then shall our lives be made open in him with glory." But in the mean time with seeking and setting our affections upon the things that are above, we must patiently suffer whatsoever God shall send unto us in this mortal life. Notwithstanding, it might happen some would say, Who is so perfect, that can let all things pass as they come, and have no care of them; suffer all things and feel nothing; be tempted of the devil, the world, and the flesh, and not be troubled? Verily no man living.

But this I say, that in the strength of Jesus Christ

* Alarmed.

things that come may pass with care; for we are worldly, and yet we are not carried with them from Christ, for we are godly in him. We may suffer things, and feel them as mortal men, yet bear them and overcome them as christian men. We may be tempted of the devil, the flesh, and the world; but yet although these things pinch, they do not pierce, and although they work sin in us, yet in Christ no damnation to those that are grafted in him.

Hereof may the christian man learn both consolation and patience: consolation, in that he is compelled both in his body and goods to feel pain and loss, and in the soul heaviness and anguish of mind: howbeit none of them shall separate him from the love that God bears him in Christ. He may learn patience, forasmuch as his enemies both of the body and soul, and also the pains they vex us with for the time, though they tarry with us as long as we live, yet when death comes, they shall depart, and give place to such joys as are prepared for us in Christ. For no pains of the world are perpetual, and whether they shall afflict us all the time of our mortal life, we know not; for they are the servants of God to go and come, as he commands them. But we must take heed we meddle not forcibly nor seditiously to put away the persecution appointed unto us by God, but remember Christ's saying, "Possess you your lives by your patience."

And in this commandment God requires this patient obedience in every man and woman. He saith not, It is sufficient that holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, evangelists, and martyrs continued their lives in patience, and in patient suffering the troubles of this world: but Christ saith to every one of his people, "By your own patience ye shall continue your life:" not that man hath patience of himself, but that he must have it for himself of God, the only giver of it, if he purpose to be a godly man. Now, therefore, as our profession and religion requires patience outwardly, without resistance and force; so it requires patience of the mind, and not to be angry with God, although he use us, that are his own creatures, as he pleases.

Also we may not murmur against God, but say always that his judgments are right and just, and rejoice that it pleases him to use us by troubles, as he used heretofore such as he most loved in this world, and have a singular ear to this commandment, "Be glad and rejoice:" for he

showeth great cause why—"Your reward is great in heaven."

These promises of Him that is the truth itself, shall, by God's grace, work both consolation and patience in the afflicted christian person. And when our Saviour Christ hath willed men in trouble to be content and patient, because God in the end of trouble, in Christ, hath ordained eternal consolation, he uses also to take from us all shame and rebuke, as though it were not an honour to suffer for Christ, because the wicked world curses and abhors such poor troubled christians. Wherefore Christ places all his, honourably, and saith, "Even so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."

We may also see with whom the afflicted for Christ's sake are esteemed, by St. Paul to the Hebrews. Whereas the number of the blessed and glorious company of saints appear now to our faith, to be in heaven in joy, yet in the letter, for the time of this life, they were in such pains and contempt as were never more. Let us therefore consider both them and all other things of the world, since the fall of man, and we shall perceive nothing come to perfection, but with such confusion and disorder to the eye of the world, as though things were rather lost for ever, than likely to come to any perfection at all. For of godly men, who ever came to heaven, no not Christ himself, until such time as the world had thought verily that both he and all his had been quite destroyed and cast away? As the wise men say of the wicked people, "We thought them to be fools, but they are in peace."

We may learn by things that nourish and maintain us, both meat and drink, what loathsomeness and in a manner abhorring they come unto, before they work their perfection in us. From life they are brought to the fire, and quite altered from that they were when they were alive; from the fire to the trencher and knife, there to be hacked; from the trencher to the mouth, and ground as small as the teeth can grind them; and from the mouth into the stomach, and there so digested before they nourish, that whosoever saw the same would loath and abhor his own nourishment, before it come to its perfection.

Is it then any marvel, if such christians as God delights in, are so mangled and defaced in this world, which is the kitchen and mill to boil and grind the flesh of God's people in, till they achieve their perfection in the world to come?

And as man looks for the nutriment of his meat, when it is fully digested, and not before: so must he look for his salvation, when he has passed this troublesome world, and not before. Raw flesh is not wholesome meat for man; and unmortified men and women are not creatures meet for God. Therefore Christ saith, that his people must be broken, and thoroughly torn in the mill of this world, and so shall they be most fine meal unto the heavenly Father. And it shall be a christian man's part, and the duty of a mind replenished with the Spirit of God, to mark the order of God in all his things, how he deals with them, and how they suffer, and are content to let God do his will upon them; as St. Paul saith: "They weep until the number of the elect be fulfilled, and never are at rest, but look for the time when God's people shall appear in glory."

We must therefore patiently suffer, and willingly attend upon God's doings, although they seem quite contrary, according to our judgment, to our welfare and salvation; as Abraham did when he was bid to offer his son Isaac, in whom God had promised the blessing and multiplying of his seed. Joseph at last came to that which God promised him, although, in the mean time, according to the judgment of the world, he was never likely to be lord over his brethren, as God had said he should be.

When Christ would make the blind man to see, he put clay upon his eyes, which, after the judgment of man, was a means rather to make him doubly blind, than to give him his sight. But he obeyed, and knew that God could work his desire, what means soever he used contrary to man's reason; and as touching this world, he uses all his after the same sort. If any smart, his people are the first; if any suffer shame, they begin; if any are subject to slander, it is those that he loves; so that he shows no face nor favour, nor scarcely any love in this world to them outwardly, but layeth clay upon their sore eyes that are sorrowful. Yet the patient man sees, as St. Paul saith, life hid under these miseries and adversities, and sight under foul clay, and in the mean time he has the testimony of a good conscience, and believes God's promises will be his consolation in the world to come, which is worth more unto him, than all the world is worth besides; and blessed is that man in whom God's Spirit

beareth record, that he is a son of God, whatsoever troubles he suffer in this troublesome world.

And to judge things indifferently, my godly wife, the troubles are not yet so general, as they were in our good fathers' time, soon after the death and resurrection of our Saviour Christ Jesus, whereof he spake in St. Matthew. Of which place you and I have many times taken great consolation, and especially from the latter part of the chapter, wherein is contained the last day and end of all troubles, I doubt not, both for you and me, and for such as love the coming of our Saviour Christ to judgment. Remember, therefore, that place, and mark it again, and you shall in this time see great consolation, and also learn much patience.

Were there ever such troubles as Christ threatened upon Jerusalem? Was there since the beginning of the world such affliction? Who were then best at ease? The apostles, that suffered persecution in body, and gathered from it ease and quietness in the promises of God. And no marvel; for Christ saith, "Lift up your heads; for your redemption is at hand;" that is to say, your eternal rest approaches and draws near. The world is stark blind, and more foolish than foolishness itself, and so are the people of the world. For when God saith, "Trouble shall come," they will have ease. And when God saith, "Be merry, and rejoice in trouble," we lament and mourn, as though we were castaways. But this the flesh, which is never merry with virtue, nor sorry with vice, never laughs with grace, nor ever weeps with sin, holds fast with the world, and lets God slip.

But, my dearly beloved wife, you know how to perceive and to beware of the vanity and crafts of the devil well enough in Christ. And that you may the better have patience in the Spirit of God, read again the 24th chapter of St. Matthew, and mark what difference there is between the destruction of Jerusalem, and that of the whole world, and you shall see, that then there were left alive many offenders to repent; but at the latter day there shall be absolute judgment and sentence never to be revoked, of eternal life and eternal death upon all men; and yet towards the end of the world we have not so much extremity as they had then, but even as we be able to bear. So does the merciful Father lay upon us now imprisonment, and I

suppose for my part shortly death, now spoil of goods, loss of friends, and the greatest loss of all, the knowledge of God's word. God's will be done. I wish in Christ Jesus, our only Mediator and Saviour, for your constancy and consolation, that you may live for ever and ever, whereof in Christ I doubt not; to whom for his blessed and most painful passion I commit you. Amen.

Your brother in Christ,

JOHN HOOPER.

October 13, Anno 1553.

LETTER II.

A letter to certain godly Persons, Professors and Lovers of the Truth, instructing them how to behave themselves in that woful alteration and change of religion.

THE grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you, my dear brethren, and with all those that unfeignedly love and embrace his holy gospel. Amen.

It is told me that the wicked idol, the mass, is established again by a law, and passed in the parliament-house.* Learn the truth of it, I pray you, and what penalty is appointed in the act, to such as speak against it; also whether there is any compulsion to constrain men to be at it. The statute being thoroughly known, such as are abroad and at liberty may provide for themselves, and avoid the danger the better. Doubtless there has not been before our time such a parliament as this is, that as many as were suspected to be favourers of God's word, should be banished out of both houses. But we must give God thanks for the truth he opened in the time of his blessed servant king Edward the sixth, and pray unto him that we deny it not, nor dishonour it with idolatry; but that we may have strength and patience rather to die ten times, than to deny him once. Blessed shall we be, if God ever makes us worthy of the honour to shed our blood for his name sake: and blessed then shall we think the parents which brought us into this world, that we should from this mortality be carried into immortality. If we

* The law by which the mass was re-established, was passed in November 1553.

follow the commandment of St. Paul, that saith, "If ye then be risen again with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," we shall neither depart from the vain transitory goods of this world, nor from this wretched and mortal life, with so great pains as others do.

Let us pray to our heavenly Father, that we may know and love his blessed will, and the glorious joy prepared for us in time to come, and that we may know and hate all things contrary to his blessed will, and also the pain prepared for the wicked men in the world to come. There is no better way to be used in this troublesome time for your consolation, than many times to have assemblies together of such men and women as are of your religion in Christ, and there to talk and renew amongst yourselves the truth of your religion. To see what you are by the word of God, and to remember what you were before you came to the knowledge thereof; to weigh and confer the dreams and false lies of the preachers, that now preach, with the word of God that retains all truth. And by such talk and familiar resorting together, you shall the better find out all their lies that now go about to deceive you, and also both know and love the truth that God has opened to us. It is very requisite, that the members of Christ comfort one another, make prayers together, and confer one with another;* so shall you be the stronger, and God's Spirit shall not be absent from you, but shall be in the midst of you, to teach you, to comfort you, to make you wise in all godly things, patient in adversity, and strong in persecution.

You see how the congregation of the wicked, by helping one another, make their wicked religion and themselves strong against God's truth and his people. If you may have some learned man, that can out of the scriptures speak unto you of faith, and true honouring of God, also that can show you the descent of Christ's church from the beginning of it until this day, so that you may perceive, by the life of your forefathers, that Christ's words, which said that all his must suffer persecution and trouble in the world, are true; and that none of all his, before our time, escaped trouble; then shall you perceive that it is but a folly for one that professes Christ truly to look for the love of the world.

* This advice was followed by the protestants when their ministers were burned or in exile.—*Strype's Memorials*, III. p. 361.

Thus shall you learn to bear trouble, and to exercise your religion, and feel indeed that Christ's words are true, "In the world ye shall suffer persecution." And when you feel your religion, indeed, say, you are no better than your forefathers; but be glad, that you may be counted worthy soldiers for this war: and pray to God when you come together, that he will use and order you and your doings to these three ends, which you must take heed to; the first, that you glorify God; the next, that you edify the church and congregation; the third, that you profit your own souls.

In all your doings beware you are not deceived. For although this time is not yet so bloody and tyrannical as the time of our forefathers, that could not bear the name of Christ, without danger of life and goods; yet is our time more perilous both for body and soul.* Therefore of us Christ saith, "Think you when the Son of man cometh, he shall find faith upon the earth?" He saith not, Think you he shall find any man or woman christened, and in name a christian? But he spake of the faith that saveth the christian man in Christ: and doubtless the scarcity of faith is now more, and will, I fear, increase, than it was in the time of the greatest tyrants that ever were; and no marvel why. Read the sixth chapter of St. John's Revelation, and you shall perceive, amongst other things, that at the opening of the fourth seal came out a pale horse, and he that sat upon him was called Death, and Hell followed him. This horse is the time wherein hypocrites and dissemblers entered into the church under the pretence of true religion, as monks, friars, nuns, massing-priests, with such others, that have killed more souls with heresy and superstition, than all the tyrants that ever were, killed bodies with fire, sword, or banishment, as appears by his name that sits upon the horse, who is called Death; for all souls that leave Christ, and trust to these hypocrites, live to the devil in everlasting pain, as is declared by him that follows the pale horse, which is Hell.

These pretended and pale hypocrites have stirred the earthquakes, that is, to wit, the princes of the world, against Christ's church, and have also darkened the sun,

* The burnings and cruelties practised towards the protestants in the three last years of queen Mary's reign had not then commenced. Soon after this letter was written "the time proved to be *more* bloody and tyrannical."

and made the moon bloody, and have caused the stars to fall from heaven. That is to say, they have darkened with mists, and daily do darken, as you hear by their sermons, the clear sun of God's most pure word: the moon, which are God's true preachers, which only fetch light at the sun of God's word, are turned into blood, prisons, and chains, so that their light cannot shine unto the world as they would. Whereupon it comes to pass, that the stars, that is to say, christian people, fall from heaven, that is, from God's most true word to hypocrisy, most devilish superstition and idolatry. Let some learned man show you all the articles of your belief and monuments of christian faith, from the time of Christ hitherto, and you shall perceive that there was never mention of such articles as these hypocrites teach. God bless you, and pray for me as I do for you.

Out of the Fleet, by your brother in Christ,

JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER III.

To my beloved in the Lord, W. P.

THE grace of God be with you. I have sent you letters for my wife, who is at Frankfort, in Germany. I pray you convey them trustily and speedily, and seal them close, after the merchant's fashion, that they be not opened. William Downton, my servant, hath the first copy of what I wrote concerning Master Hale's hurt.* I would Master Bradford saw it, and then the copy should be well kept, lest any man out of malice should add any thing to the matter more or worse than I have made it. I care not for what may come of it, I thank God; and my conscience bears me witness that I did it out of zeal for the word of God, which the bishop of Winchester called the doctrine of desperation. Not only my heart, but also my mouth, my pen, and all my power shall be against him, even till death, in this case, by God's help; let God do with the matter as it pleases his high majesty, to whom I commend you.

Yours,

29th April, 1554. JOHN HOOPER.

* It is printed in the appendix to Strype's Memorials.

LETTER IV.

To Master Farrar, bishop of St. David's, Dr. Taylor, Master Bradford, and Master Philpot, prisoners in the King's Bench in Southwark.

THE grace of God be with you. Amen. I am informed by divers, as well such as love the truth, as also by such as are not yet come unto it, that you and I shall be carried shortly to Cambridge, there to dispute for the faith, and for the religion of Christ, that we have and do profess, which is most true. I am, as I doubt not you are, ready in Christ, not only to go to Cambridge, but also to suffer, by God's help, death itself in the maintenance thereof. Weston and his accomplices have obtained the commission already, and speedily, most likely, he will put it in execution. Wherefore, dear brethren, I do advertise you of it before for divers causes. The one, to comfort you in the Lord, that the time draws near and is at hand, when we shall testify God's truth before God's enemies. The next, that you should prepare yourselves the better for it. The third, to show you what way I think we were best to use in this matter, and also to hear of every one of you your better advice, if mine be not good.

You know that such as shall be censors and judges over us, breathe and thirst for our blood, and whether we, by God's help, overcome according to the word of God, or are overcome by the force and subtlety of our adversaries, this will be the conclusion—our adversaries will say, that they overcome, and you perceive how they report of those great learned men and godly personages at Oxford.*

Wherefore I mind never to answer them, except I have books present, because they use not only false allegations of the doctors,† but also parts of the doctors against the whole course of the doctors mind. The next, that we may have sworn notaries, to take things spoken impartially; which will be very hard to have, for the adversaries will have the oversight of all things, and then make theirs better than it was, and ours worse than it was. Then if we see that two or three, or more, will speak together, or with scoffs and taunts illude and mock us, I suppose it were best to appeal, to be heard before the queen and the

* See the letters of bishop Ridley. † The writings of the Fathers.

whole council, and that would much set forth the glory of God. For many of them already know the truth, many of them err rather out of zeal than malice, and the others that are hardened should be answered fully to their shame, I doubt not, although to our smart and blood-shedding. For of this I am assured, that the commissioners appointed to hear us and judge us, mean nothing less than to hear the cause indifferently;* for they are enemies unto us and our cause, and are at a point already to give sentence against us: so that, if it were possible, with St. Stephen to speak so that they could not resist us, or to use such silence and patience as Christ did, they will proceed to revenging.

Wherefore, my dear brethren, in the mercy of Jesus Christ, I would be glad to know your advice this day or to-morrow; for shortly we shall be gone, and I verily suppose that we shall not company together, but be kept one separate from another. They will deny our appeal, yet let us challenge the appeal, and take witness thereof of such as are present, and require for indifferency* of hearing and judgment, to be heard either before the queen and the council, or else before all the parliament, as they were used in king Edward's days.

Further, for my part I will require both books and time to answer. We have been prisoners three quarters of a year, and have lacked our books; and our memories by close keeping, and ingratitude on their parts, are not so present and quick as theirs be. I trust God will be with us, yea, I doubt not but he will, and teach us to do all things in his cause godly and constantly. If our adversaries, that shall be our judges, may have their purpose, we shall dispute one day, be condemned the next day, and suffer the third day. And yet there is no law to condemn us, as far as I know, and so one of the convocation-house said this week to Dr. Weston. To whom Weston made this answer; "It matters not for a law; we have a commission to proceed with them; when they are despatched, let their friends sue the law."

Now how soon a man may have such a commission at my lord chancellor's† hand, you know. It is as hard to be obtained as an indictment for Christ at Caiaphas's hand! Besides that, the bishops having the queen so upon their side, may do all things both without the advice, and also

* Impartiality. † Bishop Gardiner.

without the knowledge of the rest of the lords of the temporalty: who, at this present, have found out the mark that the bishops shoot at, and doubtless are not pleased with their doings. I pray you help that our brother Sanders and the rest in the Marshalsea may understand these things, and send me your answer betimes. Judas sleeps not; neither know we the day nor the hour. Amen. The Lord Jesus Christ with his Holy Spirit comfort and strengthen us all. Amen. May 6, anno 1554.

Yours, and with you unto death in Christ,

JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER V.

Letter to certain godly persons, exhorting them to stick constantly to the professed truth of the gospel in these days of trial, and not to shrink from any trouble.

THE grace of God be with you, Amen. I give our heavenly Father thanks, who moves you to remember your afflicted brethren, and I do, as I am bound, pray for you, that with your remembrance of me, you provide help, and succour me with such goods, as God endues you with. Doubtless if ever a wretch and vile sinner was bound unto God, I am most especially bound for these ten months almost. Ever since my imprisonment, I have had no living nor goods to sustain myself with, yet such has been the favour of our heavenly Father, that I have had sufficient to eat and drink, and the same paid for. Seeing he is so merciful and careful for my sinful body, I doubt not but he has more care of my wretched soul, so that in both I may serve his Majesty, and be a lively and profitable member of his poor afflicted church. I do not care what extremity this world shall work or devise, praying you in the bowels of Him that shed his precious blood for you, to remember and follow the knowledge you have learned of his truth.

Be not ashamed nor afraid to follow him; beware of this sentence, that it take no place in you: "No man, saith Christ, that putteth his hand to the plough and looketh backward, is fit for the kingdom of God." Remember, that Christ willed him that would build a tower, to sit down first and look whether he were able to perform

it, lest he should begin and leave off in the midst, and so be mocked of his neighbours, and lose what he had bestowed thereon. Christ told such as would build on him eternal life, what the price thereof was, even at the beginning of his teaching, and said they should be persecuted. Also they should sometimes pay and bestow both goods and lands before the tower of salvation would be builded.

Seeing the price of truth in religion has been always the displeasure and persecution of the world, let us bear it, and Christ will recompense the charges abundantly. It is no loss to lack the love of the world, and to find the love of God; nor any harm to suffer the loss of worldly things, and find eternal life. If man hate, and God love, if man kill the body, and God bring both body and soul to eternal life, the exchange is good and profitable. For the love of God use singleness towards him. Beware of this foolish and deceitful collusion, to think that a man may serve God in spirit secretly to his conscience, although outwardly with his body and bodily presence, he cleave for civil order to such rites and ceremonies as now are used contrary to God and his word. Be assured that whosoever he be that giveth this counsel, shall be before God able to do you no more profit than the fig-leaves did unto Adam.

"Glorify God both in your bodies and in your spirits which are God's." Take heed of that commandment—no man is able to dispense with it. Such as are yet clear, and have not been present at the wicked mass and idolatrous service, let them pray to God to stand fast: such as for weakness and fear have been at it, repent and desire God's forgiveness, and doubtless he will have mercy upon you. It is a fearful thing, that many not only thus dissemble with God, but also excuse and defend the dissimulation; beware of that, dear brethren, for it is a sore matter to delight in evil things. Let us acknowledge and bewail our evil; then God shall send grace to amend us, and strength better to bear his cross.

I doubt not but you will judge of my writing as I mean towards you in my heart, which is, doubtless, your eternal salvation in Christ Jesus, to whom I heartily commend you.

June 14, 1554. JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER VI.

To my dearly beloved friend in Christ, Master John Hall.

The grace of God be with you. Amen.

It was much to my comfort, I assure you, when I understood by the bearer of this, William Downton, my faithful servant, that you and your wife were in health. I had occasion to inquire for you many times before the departure of my poor wife, that you should have helped her out of the land from the hands of the cruel, but I could not hear where you were. I was told you abode in the country, with your wife, to whom make my hearty commendations, and to all the rest of your house that fear God; and my trust is, you do not forget your duty towards God in this troublesome world. See that you tarry with him in one hour of trouble, and, doubtless, he will keep you for ever with him in everlasting joys. I would write more, but this bearer can tell what need I have to make haste. Fare you well as myself, and be strong in Christ, for I thank him, that for my part I am not ashamed of his gospel, neither afraid of the pope, the devil, nor the gates of hell.—The Lord's will be done.

Written the 4th day of August, 1554.

Your poor friend,
JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER VII.

To all my dear brethren, my relievers and helpers in the city of London.

THE grace of God be with you, Amen. I have received from you, dearly beloved in our Saviour Jesus Christ, by the hands of my servant, William Downton, your liberality, for which I most heartily thank you, and I praise God highly in you and for you, who has moved your hearts to show this kindness towards me, praying him to preserve you from all famine, scarcity, and lack of the truth of his word, which is the lively food of your souls, as you preserve my body from hunger, and other necessities, which should

happen unto me, were it not cared for by the benevolence and charity of godly people.

Such as have taken all worldly goods and lands from me, and spoiled me of all that I had, have imprisoned my body, and appointed not one halfpenny to feed or relieve me with. But I do forgive them, and pray for them daily in my poor prayer unto God, and from my heart I wish their salvation, and quietly and patiently bear their injuries, wishing that no farther extremity be used towards us. Yet, if the contrary seem best unto our heavenly Father, I have made my reckoning, and fully resolved myself to suffer the uttermost they are able to do against me, yea, death itself; by the aid of Christ Jesus, who died the most vile death of the cross for us wretches and miserable sinners. But of this I am assured, that the wicked world, with all its force and power, shall not touch one of the hairs of our heads without leave and license of our heavenly Father, whose will be done in all things. If he will life, life be it; if he will death, death be it. Only we pray that our wills may be subject unto his will; and then, although both we and all the world see no other thing but death, yet, if he think life best, we shall not die, no, although the sword be drawn out over our heads: as Abraham thought to kill his son Isaac, yet, when God perceived that Abraham had surrendered his will to God's will, and was content to kill his son, God then saved his son.

Dearly beloved, if we are contented to obey God's will, and for his commandment's sake to surrender our goods and ourselves to be at his pleasure, it makes no matter whether we keep goods and life, or lose them. Nothing can hurt us that is taken from us for God's cause, nor can any thing, at length, do us good that is preserved contrary to God's commandments. Let us wholly suffer God to use us and ours after his holy wisdom, and beware we neither use nor govern ourselves contrary to his will by our own wisdom; for if we do, our wisdom will, at length, prove foolishness. That is kept to no good purpose which we keep contrary to his commandments. It can by no means be taken from us, which he would should tarry with us. He is no good christian that conducts himself and his as worldly means serve: for he that doth so shall have as many changes as happen in the world. To-day with the world he shall like and praise the truth of God; to-

morrow as the world will, so will he like and praise the falsehood of man; to-day with Christ, and to-morrow with antichrist. Wherefore, dear brethren, as touching your behaviour towards God, use both your inward spirits, and your outward bodies; your inward and your outward man, I say, not after the manner of men, but after the infallible word of God.

Refrain from evil in both; and glorify your heavenly Father in both. For if you think you can serve him inwardly in the heart, and yet outwardly serve with the world in external service the thing that is not God, you deceive yourselves. For both the body and the soul must concur together in the honour of God, as St. Paul plainly teaches. (1 Cor. vi.) For if an honest wife be bound to give both heart and body to faith and service in marriage; and if an honest wife's faith in the heart cannot stand with harlotry, or a defiled body outwardly; much less can the true faith of a christian in the service of christianity stand with the bodily service of external idolatry. For the mystery of marriage is not so honourable between man and wife as it is between Christ and every christian man, as St. Paul saith.

Therefore, dear brethren, pray to the heavenly Father, that as he spared not the soul nor the body of his dearly beloved Son, but applied both of them, with extreme pain, to work our salvation both of body and soul; so he will give us all grace to apply our bodies and souls to be servants unto him. For, doubtless, he requires the one as well as the other, and cannot be miscontented with the one, and well pleased with the other. Either he hates both, or loves both; he divides not his love to one, and his hatred to the other. Let us not, therefore, good brethren, divide ourselves, and say our souls serve him, whatsoever our bodies do to the contrary for civil order and policy.

But, alas! I know by myself what troubles you, that is, the great danger of the world, that will revenge, ye think, your service to God with sword and fire, with loss of goods and lands. But, dear brethren, weigh on the other side, that your enemies and God's enemies shall not do so much as they would, but as much as God shall suffer them, who can trap them in their own counsels, and destroy them in the midst of their fury. Remember you are the workmen of the Lord, and called into his vineyard, there to labour till evening tide, that you may receive your

penny, which is more worth than all the kings of the earth. But He that calls us into his vineyard has not told us how sorely and how fervently the sun shall trouble us in our labour; but has bid us labour, and commit the bitterness thereof unto Him, who can and will so moderate all afflictions, that no man shall have more laid upon him, than in Christ he shall be able to bear. Unto whose merciful tuition and defence I commend both your souls and bodies. September 2, anno 1554.

Yours, with my poor prayer,
JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER VIII.

A letter sent to the christian congregation, wherein is proved that true faith cannot be kept secret in the heart without confession thereof openly to the world, when occasion serveth.

ST. PAUL, in the tenth chapter to the Romans, annexes the faith of Christ in the heart, with the confession of the mouth, so that the one can be no more without the other, than fire can be without heat; saying these words: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth he confesseth unto salvation." Wherein he declares, that even as the cause of our acceptance through Christ, is the confidence and faith of the heart in the promises of God; so is the confession outwardly of the same faith by the mouth, the fruit that all christian faithful hearts bring forth through the same gift of God. And where this effect of confession of faith is not, there wants also the cause of confession, which is true faith; for as the tree is known by her fruits, so is faith by her effects. And as the want of fruit is a demonstration that the tree is unprofitable; so the want of true confession of faith is a token that the faith is dead. The end of the unprofitable tree is cutting down and casting into the fire; the end of fruitless faith is death and casting into eternal damnation.

Wherefore St. Peter requires us to make answer to every man that demands of us, of such hope as is in us, with gentleness and reverence, which is a real testimony that we sanctify God in our hearts, as it is before expressed in the same chapter. For the greatest honour that

man can give to God, is to confess, in the time of trouble, his holy word and faith, truly and faithfully. Wherefore it is the duty of every christian to pray and study to have a thorough knowledge of his faith in Christ; and as the glory of God shall require, and the cause of his religion, to be ready to make answer for the same, howsoever the world, fear, displeasure, friendship, or other hinderances shall move us to the contrary, upon pain, saith Christ in the tenth of Matthew, that I will deny him before my Father which is in heaven. But how hard a thing it is to confess Christ in the day of trouble, not only the scripture, but also daily experience in good men and women declares. True confession is warded on every side with many dangers, on the right hand and on the left, now with fair means, then with foul threatenings, fearful and dangerous: as it is said by Christ our Saviour, "They shall betray you to the judges, and of them you shall be beaten and judged to death." On the other side shall pull us back, the love of wife, children, brother, sister, kin, friends, and love unto ourselves. But he that is overcome by any of these means, has his judgment; "He is not fit for me," saith Christ.

These things are impossible unto men, yet to christian men, in Christ, they are possible, and so necessary, that christianity and true religion cannot be in him, that is afraid to confess Christ and his gospel in the time of persecution. The wisdom of the world says, "Although I accomplish the desire of my friends, and to the sight of the world am present at the mass, and with my body do as other men do, or as I may do; yet my heart is quite contrary to their belief, and I do detest such idolatry, and believe that the thing that I am present at, is mere idolatry and abomination."

Here are fair words for an evil purpose; and a pretended excuse, for a just condemnation before God. For if it be true that you know the thing which you resort unto to be to the dishonour of God, why do you honour it with your presence? If you know it to be evil, why refrain you not from it? If your conscience say, it is idolatry, why serves your body such things as your faith abhors? If in your heart you know but one God, why with your exterior presence serve you the thing that you know is not God? If your faith see idolatry, why does your silence confess and allow the same? God loves not two men in one. If the

inward man know the truth, why does the outward man confess a falsehood? If your spirit be persuaded that the mass is idolatry, why do you with your bodily presence use it as a God and give godly honour to it? Do you not perceive that it is written, (Isaiah xxix. Matt. xv.) "These people honour me with their mouths, but their hearts are far from me?" The cause why God was offended with these people was, that outwardly they confessed him and served him, but their hearts were far from him inwardly. Wherefore, you may see what it is to bear two faces in one hood, outwardly to serve God, and inwardly to serve the devil. Now mark of this place, if it be so horrible and damnable a thing to be false in the heart, which none knows but God, and it is also worthy of damnation; what is to be judged of the outward and manifest use of idolatry, which not only God, but also every good man knows and abhors?

There is no colour nor cloked hypocrisy that God can away with. If the heart think not as the tongue speaks, or else the tongue speak otherwise than the heart thinks, both are abominable before God. Read the third and the sixth chapters of the first epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, where St. Paul saith: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" If your body be the temple of the Holy Ghost, what agreement hath it with idolatry? Can one body at one time be the temple of the Holy Ghost, and also be present at such idolatry as God abhors and detests? Can a man serve two masters? If he do, he loves, as Christ saith, the one and hates the other. As God requires of a faithful man a pure heart; even so he requires that his external profession in all things be according thereto, for both body and soul are debtors unto God, and he redeemed them both.

The word of God saith unto us, "Glorify and bear God in your bodies." If we are present at such idolatry as God forbids, and our own knowledge in our conscience is assured to be evil, do we glorify God in our bodies? No, doubtless, we dishonour him, and make our bodies the servants of idolatry, not only to God's dishonour, but also to the great danger both of body and soul. For this is a true saying of St. Augustin, "He that doth against his conscience, buildeth to hell fire."

It is not enough for a christian man to say, I know the

mass is naught; but to obey civil laws and orders, I will do outwardly as other men do, yet, in my heart, abhor it, and never think it to be good. Doubtless, these two minds, the spirit to think well, and the body to do evil, in this respect are both naught, and God will cast the whole man out of his mouth, as he did the minister of the congregation of Laodicea. (Rev. iii.)

The eighth chapter, and the tenth of the first epistle to the Corinthians, in this matter and in this time, are places very expedient to lead and govern the judgment of every christian man. There we may see that the Corinthians indeed had knowledge, and perceived right well that neither the idols amongst them, neither the meat dedicated unto the idols, were any thing, and thought as lightly of both, as of things of nothing, and upon that knowledge they used to be present, and also to eat at the feast, and of the meats dedicated unto idols. Wherewithal Paul was so sorely offended, that he gave this sentence: "If a man see thee, which hast knowledge, sit at table in the idols' temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak, be emboldened to eat those things which are sacrificed to idols? And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died. Now when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." This judgment of Paul is more to be followed, than all our own feigned and wrested defences, which would fain seem to do well, when we halt on both sides, which God abhors. Paul had a profound and deep consideration of that man's fault that has knowledge, and perceiveth his dissimulation to be dangerous and perilous to all persons whom he dwells with.

First, such as are of a right and stayed judgment and will not prostrate their bodies to an idol, condemn, and needs must do so, such dissimulation. The very idolaters themselves have a defence of their abomination, by the presence of him whom the christian congregation knows to have knowledge. The weaker sort that would gladly take the best way, by a dissembler halting and playing of both hands, embrace both in body and in soul the evil that he abhors in his heart; and though he have knowledge, yet with his presence he esteems it as others do which have no knowledge. If St. Paul said, that the weak brother perishes for whom Christ died, by him that abuses knowledge in meats and drinks that of themselves are indifferent:

how much more by the knowledge of him that uses manifest idolatry which is forbidden of God as a thing not indifferent! Take heed what St. Paul means, and what he would prove against this man who had knowledge that neither the idols nor the meats dedicated to idols were any thing. Forsooth this he would prove: that a poor man that wants knowledge, by the example of him that has knowledge, doth there adventure to do evil, which he would not do in case he saw not those that he had good opinion of, to go before him as authors of the evil. And indeed the ignorant people, or those that are half persuaded in a truth, yea, or else thoroughly persuaded what is evil, when they have any notable man or woman for an example to follow, they think in following of them they are excused, yea, although peradventure they do it against their consciences; as you may see how many good men by the example of Peter began to dissemble, yea, Barnabas himself.

But let the judgment of men reflect, and measure from God's word how great offence this is before God, so to make a doubtful conscience or striving against knowledge to do any thing that is not godly. Christ saith, It were better a millstone were hanged about such an offender's neck, and he cast into the sea. And doubtless the pain must be the greater, because we give offence willingly, and against our own consciences; and this before God is a wicked knowledge that causes another to perish. Wo be unto him that is learned to bring his brother to destruction. Does a christian man know the truth to bring his brother to a lie? For these weaklings that we make to stumble, Christ died, as St Paul saith. God forbid we should confirm any man's conscience in evil. Let every man of God weigh with himself the doctrine of St. Paul, that commands us to flee idolatry.

And mark what St. Paul in that place calls idolatry. It is to be seen plainly that he speaks not of such idolatry as men commit, that lack knowledge in their hearts what God is and what God is not. For in the eighth chapter, before, he saith, that men know that the idols were no gods, and that although by name the Gentiles had many gods, yet they knew that there was but one God. Therefore he means nothing by this commandment, "Flee idolatry," but to avoid such rites, ceremonies, and usages, as outwardly were used in honour and reverence of the idols that were no gods. And weighing the right use of the

Lord's supper and the dignity thereof, with the manner and use of the gentiles towards their gods, he would bring the church of the Corinthians to understand how that, as the divine and sacred rites, ceremonies, and use of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, did sanctify him, and declare him that used it, to be the servant and child of God; so the rites and sacraments of the gentiles defiled the users thereof, and declared them to be the servants and children of the idol, notwithstanding that they knew in their hearts that the idol was nothing. God by his sacrament unites us unto him; let us pray, therefore, to him that we pollute not ourselves with any rites, ceremonies, or usages not instituted by God, and so divide ourselves from him.

In this cause, if a faithful man should be at the mass, it is to be considered with what mind those that he there accompanies himself with, come thither, and what is the end of the work that the priest doth. The people come to honour the bread and wine as God, and the priest purposes to consecrate both God and man, and so to offer Christ to the Father for remission of sin. Now they, that adjoin themselves unto these people, profess and declare a society and fellowship of the same impiety, as St. Paul laid to the Corinthians' charge. St. Paul was not offended with the Corinthians because they lacked knowledge of the true God, but because, contrary to their knowledge, they associated themselves with idolaters. For this is true, that in all rites, sacraments, and honourings, whether they are of God or of the devil, there is a profession of a communion; so that every man protests to be of the same religion that the rest are of, who are partakers with him. I know there are many evasions made by men who judge that a man may, with safeguard of conscience, be at the mass. But forasmuch as Master Calvin, Master Bullinger, and others, have thoroughly answered them: such as are in doubt may read their books. This is my conscience according to God's word.* JOHN HOOPER.

* Thomas Sampson, then an exile, wrote thus to the inhabitants of Allhallows, Bread-street, whose pastor he formerly had been. "If they thought they could embrace both popery and the gospel, they deceived themselves. For they could not both hold the taste of Christ's death in their consciences, and also allow that mass which was the defacer of Christ's death. They could not embrace the right use of the Lord's Supper, and also use and partake the horrible profanation of the same."—*Strype's Memorials*, III. p. 249.

LETTER IX.

To the faithful and lively members of our Saviour Jesus Christ, inhabiting the city of London, grace and peace from the heavenly Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your faith and firm hope of eternal life, dearly beloved, which, of long time, you have learned and thoroughly persuaded yourselves in, by the truth and infallible verity of the heavenly word, sealed with Christ's most precious blood, is very sorely and dangerously assaulted, and by all means possible, attempted to be taken from you, that you should no longer credit God's truth, but believe man's lies; nor have your salvation by Christ that once died and offered himself for sin once for all, but that you should believe your salvation in Christ, to be many times offered by wicked men every day in the abominable mass; to the utter treading under foot and defacing of Christ's death, as the wicked pope and his adherents would persuade you, and not as Christ your Saviour hath taught you. But this sudden and miserable change from the truth unto falsehood, and from God and Christ to the devil and antichrist, doubtless comes of God for our manifold sins towards the heavenly Father our Shepherd, that taught us a long time with his blessed word, and we were neither thankful for it, nor yet put our trust in him, as in one that could alone save and defend his own word. But we thought, in our foolishness, that the world was so much and in so many ways with the word of God, that even by man's strength it might have been defended, whereas the truth of God's word is permanent, and never fails, saying: "Cursed be they that make flesh their defence and shield."

King David, when God had brought him to possess his kingdom peaceably, said, foolishly, "I shall never more be disquieted," but yet the Lord turned his face from him, and he found straightway such an alteration as he never found before, with increase of new dangers, and more troubles than ever he had before. Even, likewise, when God had given us a blessed and holy king, and such magistrates, although they were sinners, as wished the glory of God alone to be preferred, by true doctrine; we, like carnal men, thought ourselves so sure and so established,

that it had not been possible to have seen such a piteous and miserable change, and the truth of God's word so oppressed, as we see at this present day. But we are most worthily punished, and even in the same ways that we have offended. We put our trust in flesh, and where God's Spirit in flesh dwelled, in our holy and blessed king Edward the sixth—he is now dead in the flesh, and his holy soul rests with the heavenly Father in joys for ever. He is now, I say, taken from us, and cannot help us. And such as in his time seemed much to favour the glory of God, are become God's enemies, and can both hear others proceed against the glory of God, and also set forth the same themselves as much as they may; so that such spiritual and godly persons as sought God's glory in the flesh, are taken from us, or else are in such case, that they can do us no good. And such flesh as followed and loved God in the sight of the world, and had great advantage by his word, are become his enemies, and not only his, but also enemies to his members.

But yet, as king David knew his foolish folly, and with repentance repented and found grace; so it may please God to give us of his grace and Holy Spirit, to amend our faults in the like offences, and help us, as he did him. But, doubtless, great is our iniquity. For there never was such great abomination read of, and so quickly to prevail, as this abomination of the wicked mass has prevailed in England. And all christian men know that the Turks and heathens neither have, nor yet ever had, any so sensibly known and manifest an idol.

Wherefore, that almighty God of his mercy may preserve his people in this noble city of London, I have written upon the twenty-third psalm of king David, to advertise men how they shall beware of heresies and false doctrine, and live to his honour and glory. Albeit, I know, dearly beloved, that all those who seek God's honour, and the furtherance of his gospel, are accounted the queen's enemies, although we daily pray for her grace, and never think her harm: but we must be content to suffer slander, and patiently to bear all such injuries. Nevertheless, this is out of doubt, that the queen's highness hath no authority to compel any man to believe any thing contrary to God's word, neither may the subject give her grace that obedience; in case he do, his soul is lost for ever. Our bodies, goods, and lives are at her

highness's commandment, and she shall have them as of true subjects; but the soul of man for religion, is bound to none but unto God and his holy word.

JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER X.

An answer to a friend, for a woman that was troubled by her husband in matters of religion, how she should behave herself towards him.

THE grace and peace of God, our dear Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be with you. Amen.

As concerning the party whom you wrote unto me of, I have here sent you mine advice, and what I think is best in this case to be done. First, she shall remember the counsel of St. Paul, 1 Cor. vii. where he speaks to such as are coupled in matrimony, and are of two divers religions: if the unbelieving man will dwell with the faithful woman, the wife cannot forsake him. Or in case the unbelieving woman will dwell with her believing husband, the husband cannot forsake her. But if the unbelieving party, whether it be husband or wife, will depart, the believing party is at liberty. Now in this time, to believe that the priest can make God, or to believe that which was not God yesterday, can be both God and man to-day, and so to honour that which was mere bread yesterday, for the true God that made both heaven and earth and all that are in them, and for the body and soul of Christ that suffered for our redemption, and took from us our sins upon the cross, is very idolatry, and to be committed by no christian man; for the pain of it, without repentance, is everlasting damnation.

In matrimony it is right, therefore, that, which party soever be persuaded and knows the truth, be it the husband or the wife, the truth be spoken, taught, and opened unto the party that is not persuaded. For as St. Paul saith, "How knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? or how knowest thou, O woman, whether thou shalt save thy husband?" Therefore let the best and more godly party be diligent in saving, by his or her labours, the party that is not instructed nor persuaded in the truth. If it prevail, then is the worse part amended,

and the best part hath done his or her duty and office, as it is commanded. (Ephes. v. Colos. iii. 1 Peter iii.)

In case the worse part will not be amended, but tarry still in error, and so offend the almighty God, the author of marriage, let the best part, that is persuaded and knows the truth, as, in this case, the woman, labour with her companions to be free and at liberty, and not to be compelled to honour any false God, or to serve God otherwise than she knows she may do with a good conscience, as she is taught by the word of God. And if she may thus obtain to be at liberty, and be not compelled to do things against her conscience, she may not in any wise depart from him that she is married unto. If this woman cannot win her husband to the truth, nor obtain to live freely and at liberty in the faith of Christ herself, let her cause some godly and grave man or woman to persuade with her husband, as well for his own better knowledge, as for the freedom and liberty of herself, and let her, and whosoever entreats of the matter, use modesty, soberness, and charity, and pray unto God that their doings may have virtuous and godly success.

In case, which God forbid, the husband would not reform himself of his error, nor suffer his wife to refrain from the company and fellowship of such as are present at the mass, where an idol is honoured for God, the wife must make answer soberly and christianly, that she is forbidden by God's laws to commit idolatry, and that God is more to be obeyed than man, and so in any case beware she offend not against the first commandment, which is, "Thou shalt have no other gods but me."

It may come to pass, that when the husband shall perceive the wife's love and reverence towards him, and also her constancy and strength in the truth and true religion of God, although he be not converted unto the truth by her, yet he will be contented to suffer her to use the liberty of her conscience, without compulsion to any religion that she by God's word detests and abhors. But if there be no remedy, but either the wife must follow her husband's commandment in idolatry, or else suffer the extremity of the law; here must the wife remember and learn whether there be any law or not, that can compel her ordinarily to come to the mass, where idolatry is committed. If there be no law or other means to compel her than her husband's foul words, which are nothing else but threatenings to put

her in fear, she must, if she can with wisdom and womanhood, amend the same; if she cannot, then must she christianly and patiently bear them as a woman of God, that for his sake must suffer as much as his pleasure is to lay upon her.

In case there be a law to compel her and all others, if otherwise she will not obey, to come to the mass; first, she must wisely and discreetly weigh her husband's nature, whether he is wont to be in deed, works, and offers, cruel as he is in words. If she can find that his nature is, as the most part of men are, more churlish and cruel in words than in works, then howsoever he threatens by dangerous words, he will not accuse his wife to harm her, but rather excuse her. In case either for lack of love, or for fear of losing of his goods, she perceive verily that he minds to bring her into danger by law, then must she pray to God, and use one of these extreme remedies. First, if she find herself by prayer strong to abide the extremity of the law, yea, though she should die, let her in no case depart from her husband. In case she finds herself too weak to suffer such extremity, then rather than to break company and marriage between God and her, conjoined by the precious blood of Christ, she must convey herself into some place where idolatry may be avoided.

For if the husband love the wife, or the wife the husband, more than Christ, neither he nor she is meet for Christ. (Matt. x. xvi. Luke ix. xiv.) Yea, if a man love his own life more than Christ, he is not fit for Christ. And what does it avail a man to win all the world and to lose his soul? But here the woman must take heed, that in case, for the keeping of the marriage between God and her she depart from her husband, that she be always in honest, virtuous, and godly company. So that she may at all times have record for her godly behaviour, if any thing should be laid to her charge, and let her live a sole, sober, and modest life, with soberness and prayer to God, that it may please him to banish such wicked laws and wicked religion as make debate between God and man, and husband and wife; and then God shall from time to time give counsel to every good man and woman what is best to be done in such pitiful cases, for his honour and to the salvation of our woful and troubled consciences.

Out of the Fleet, by the prisoner of the Lord,

JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER XI.

To my dearly beloved sister in the Lord, mistress Ann Warcop.

The grace of God be with you. Amen. I thank you for your loving token. I pray you, burden not yourself too much. It were right for me rather to bear a pain, than to be a hinderance to many. I rejoiced at the coming of this bearer, to understand of your constancy, and that you are fully resolved, by God's grace, rather to suffer extremity, than to go from the truth in God which you have professed.

He that gave you grace to begin in so infallible a truth, will follow you in the same unto the end. But, my loving sister, as you are travelling this perilous journey, take this lesson with you, practised by wise men; whereof you may read in the second of St. Matthew's gospel. Such as travelled to find Christ, followed the star only, and as long as they saw it, they were assured they were in the right way, and had great joy in their journey. But when they entered into Jerusalem, (whereas the star led them not thither, but unto Bethlehem,) and there asked the citizens for that which the star showed before; as long as they tarried in Jerusalem, asking where Christ was born, they were not only ignorant of Bethlehem, but also lost the sight of the star that led them before.

Whereof we learn, while we are going in this life to seek Christ that is above, to beware we lose not the star of God's word, which is the only mark that shows us where Christ is, and which way we may come unto him. But as Jerusalem stood in the way, and was an impediment to these wise men; so the synagogue of antichrist, that bears the name of Jerusalem, which by interpretation is called the vision of peace, and amongst the people now is called the catholic church, stands in the way that pilgrims must go by through this world to Bethlehem, the house of saturity* and plentifulness, and is an impediment to all christian travellers; yea, and except the more grace of God be, will keep the pilgrims still in her, that they shall not come where Christ is. And to stay them indeed, they take away the star of light, which is God's

* Fulness, repletion.

word, so that it cannot be seen: as you may see how the celestial star was hid from the wise men, when they asked of the pharisees at Jerusalem where Christ was born. You may see what great dangers happened unto these wise men, while they were learning of liars where Christ was. First, they were out of their way, and next they lost their guide and conductor, the heavenly star. Christ is mounted from us into heaven, and there we seek him, as we say; and let us go thitherward by the star of his word. Beware we happen not to come into Jerusalem, the church of men, and ask for him. If we do, we go out of the way, and lose also our conductor and guide that alone leads us straight thither.

The poets write in fables, that Jason, when he fought with the dragon in the isle of Colchis, was preserved by the medicines of Medea, and so won the golden fleece. And they write also that Phaeton, whom they feign the son and heir of the high god Apollo, would needs upon a day conduct the sun round about the world; but as they feign, he missed of the accustomed course: whereupon when he went too high, he burnt heaven, and when he went too low, he burnt the earth and the waters.

These profane histories shame us that be christian men. Jason against the poison of the dragon used only the medicine of Medea. What a shame is it for a christian man against the poison of the devil, heresy, and sin, to use any other remedy, than Christ and his word. Phaeton for lack of knowledge was afraid of every sign of the zodiac, that the sun passed by; wherefore he went now too low, and now too high, and at length fell down and drowned himself in the sea. Christian men for lack of knowledge, and for fear of such dangers as christian men must needs pass by, go quite out of order, and at length fall into the pit of hell.

Sister, take heed: you shall in your journey towards heaven meet with many a monstrous beast; therefore have the salve of God's word ready. You shall meet with husband, children, lovers, and friends, that shall, if God be not with them, (but God be praised he is, I would it were so with all others,) be very lets and impediments to your purpose. You shall meet with slander and contempt of the world, and be accounted ungracious and ungodly. You shall hear and meet with cruel tyranny to do you all extremities; you shall now and then see the troubles of your

own conscience, and feel your own weakness. You shall hear that you are cursed by the sentence of the catholic church, with such like terrors; but pray to God, and follow the star of his word, and you shall arrive at the port of eternal salvation, by the merits only of Jesus Christ; to whom I commend you and all yours most heartily.

Yours in Christ,

JOHN HOOPER.*

LETTER XII.

To a certain godly Woman, instructing her how she should behave herself in the time of her widowhood.

THE grace of God, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, be with you, and all them that unfeignedly love his holy gospel. Amen.

I thank you, dear sister, for your most loving remembrance; and although I cannot recompense the same, yet do I wish with all my heart, that God would do it, requiring you not to forget your duty towards God in these perilous days, in the which the Lord will try us. I trust you do increase, by reading of the scriptures, the knowledge you have of God, and that you diligently apply yourself to follow the same; for knowledge helps not, except the life is according thereto. Further, I do heartily pray you, to consider the state of your widowhood; and if God shall put in your mind to change it, remember the saying of St. Paul, 1 Cor. vii. "It is lawful for the widow or maiden to marry to whom they list, so it be in the Lord," that is to say, to such a one as is of Christ's religion.

Dearly beloved in Christ, remember these words, for you shall find thereby great joy and comfort, if you change your state. Whereof I will, when I have better leisure, as now I have none at all, further advertise you. In the mean time I commend you to God, and the guiding of his good Spirit, who stablish and confirm you in all well doing, and keep you blameless to the day of the Lord. Watch and pray, for this day is at hand.

Yours assured in Christ,

JOHN HOOPER.

* Mrs. Warcop was a widow; among her other good deeds she received and concealed bishop Jewel till he could escape beyond sea.—*Strype.*

LETTER XIII.

To one that was fallen from the known truth of the Gospel to antichrist and his damnable religion.

Grace, mercy, and peace of conscience, be multiplied in all penitent hearts. Amen.

Dear brother in Christ Jesus, it is not long since I was informed what love and fervent zeal you have heretofore borne to God's true religion, appearing as well by your life and conversation, as by absenting yourself from the idolaters' temple and congregation of false worshippers. But now, alas! through the devilish persuasions and wicked counsel of worldly men, you have declined from your former profession, building again that which before you destroyed, and so are become a trespasser, bearing a stranger's yoke with the unbelievers. Of which ever since I was informed, I have been marvellously moved with inward affections, much lamenting so great and sudden a change, as to be turned from Him that called you in the grace of Christ, unto the dissimulation of wicked hypocrites, which, as St. Paul saith, is nothing else, but that there are some which trouble you, intending to make you like as they are, even lovers of themselves, whose hearts are wedded to the perishing treasures of this world, wherein is their whole joy and felicity, contrary to St. John, who saith: "See that ye love not the world, neither those things which are in the world." But they as men without ears, and having hearts without understanding, neither weigh the terrible threatenings of God against such offenders, and the most woful punishment due for the same, nor yet consider the loving admonition and calling of God, who both teaches how to avoid his wrath, and also by what means to attain salvation.

Wherefore, dear brother, I humbly beseech you, even by the mercifulness of God, and as you tender your own salvation, to give ear no longer to their pestilent persuasions, but even now forthwith to repent: and have no longer fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, neither fashion you yourself again like unto the world. Delight not in the friendship thereof, for all such are the enemies of God. Grieve not any longer the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Acknowledge your offence, and from whence you are fallen; prostrate yourself before God, asking mercy for Christ's sake. Mourn with Mary Magdalen, lament with David, cry with Jonah, weep with Peter, and make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, whose pitiful eyes always attend to wipe away the tears from every troubled conscience. Such is his entire love toward all those that turn unto him, making them this sweet promise, confirmed by a mighty and vehement kind of speaking: "Tell them as truly as I live, saith he, I will not the death of a sinner, but much rather that he turn from his evil ways and live. Turn you, turn you from your ungodly ways, O ye of the house of Israel; O wherefore will ye die?" Behold, ye are here forgiven, your sin is blotted out, and the most joyful countenance of God turned again towards you.

What now remains? Verily this, that you from henceforth keep circumspect watch, and become a follower of Christ, sustaining for his name's sake, all such adversities as shall be measured unto you by the sufferance of God our heavenly Father, who so cares for us, that not one hair of our heads shall perish without his will. Who also, considering the tender and weak faith of his children, not able as yet to stand against the force of antichrist's tyranny, gives them this loving liberty; "When ye be persecuted in one city, flee to another." O most tender compassion of Christ! how careful is he over his people! Who would not now, rather than offend so merciful a God, flee this wicked realm, as your most christian brother and many others have done. Or else with boldness of heart, and patience of spirit, bear manfully the cross even unto death, as divers of our brethren have done before us, as is declared at large in Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, which I pass over, and come to our Saviour Christ, whose example for our singular comfort St. Paul encourages us to follow, saying: "Let us also, seeing that we are compassed with so great a multitude of witnesses, lay away all that presses down, and the sin that hangs on, and let us run with patience unto the battle that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, abode the cross and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, &c."—"From whence he shall come shortly," saith St. John, "and his rewards with him,

to give every man according as his deed shall be. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that their power may be in the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates unto the city, where they, saith Isaiah, shall have their pleasure in the Lord, who will carry them on high, above the earth, and will feed them with the heritage of Jacob their father, for the Lord's own mouth has so promised."

Thus I have been bold to write unto you for the christian love's sake that I bear to you, whose salvation I wish as mine own, beseeching God that your whole spirit, soul, and body may be kept faultless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Your brother in Christ,

JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER XIV.

*To Mrs. Wilkinson, a woman hearty in God's cause, and comfortable to his afflicted members.**

THE grace of God, and the comfort of his Holy Spirit, be with you. Amen.

I am very glad to hear of your health, and do thank you for your loving tokens. But I am a great deal more glad to hear how christianly you avoid idolatry, and prepare yourself to suffer the extremity of the world, rather than endanger yourself to God. You do as you ought to do in this behalf; and in suffering transitory pains, you shall avoid permanent torments in the world to come. Use your life, and keep it with as much quietness as you can, so that you offend not God. The ease that comes with his displeasure, turns at length to unspeakable pains; and the gain of the world, with the loss of his favour, is beggary and wretchedness.

Reason is to be amended in this cause of religion: for it will choose and follow an error with the multitude, if it may be allowed, rather than turn to faith, and follow the truth with the people of God. Moses found the same fault in himself, and amended it, choosing rather to be afflicted with the people of God, than to use the liberty of the king's daughter, that accounted him as her son.

Pray for contentment and peace of the Spirit, and rejoice in such troubles as shall happen unto you for the

* Mrs. Wilkinson afterwards died in exile at Frankfort.—*Fox.*

truth's sake: for in that respect Christ saith, "You be happy." Pray also for me, I pray you, that I may do in all things the will of our heavenly Father; to whose tuition and defence I commend you.

JOHN HOOPER.*

LETTER XV.

To a merchant of London, by whose means he had received much comfort in his great necessities in the Fleet.

THE grace of God be with you. Amen. I thank God and you for the great help and consolation I have received in the time of adversity by your charitable means, but most rejoice, that you are not altered from truth, although falsehood cruelly seeks to distain her. Judge not, my brother, truth by outward appearance, for truth now appears worse and is rejected more vilely than falsehood. Leave the outward show, and see by the word

* Among many other memorable acts and notes worthy to be remembered in the history of master Hooper, this is also not to be forgotten which happened between him and a bragging friar, a little after the beginning of his imprisonment: the story whereof here followeth.

A friar came from France to England with great vaunt, asking who was the greatest heretic in all England, thinking belike to do some great act upon him. To whom answer was made, that master Hooper had then the greatest name to be the chiefest ringleader, who was then in Fleet prison. The friar coming to him, asked why he was committed to prison.

He said, "For debt."

"Nay," said he, "it was for heresy."

Which when the other had denied, "What sayest thou," quoth he, to "This is my body?"

Master Hooper, being partly moved at the sudden question, desired that he might ask of him again another, which was this:

"What remains after the consecration in the sacrament, any bread or no?"

"No bread at all," saith he.

"And when you break it, what do you break; whether bread or the body?" saith master Hooper.

"No bread," saith the friar, "but the body only."

"If you do so," saith master Hooper, "you do great injury, not only to the body of Christ, but also you break the Scriptures, which say; you shall not break of him one bone."

With that the friar, having nothing ready to answer, recoiled back, and with his circles and crosses began to use exorcisms against master Hooper, as though the devil had been present in the place. This and more master Hooper wrote to mistress Wilkinson in a letter which was read to her by John Kelke who is yet alive. (Fox, ed. 1576.)

of God what truth is, and accept truth, and dislike her not, though man call her falsehood. As it is now, so hath it been heretofore—the truth rejected, and falsehood received. Such as have professed truth, for truth have smarted; and the friends of falsehood laughed them to scorn. The trial of both has been by contrary success; the one having the commendation of truth, by man, but the condemnation of falsehood by God, flourishing for a time, with endless destruction; the other afflicted a little season, but ending with immortal joys.

Wherefore, dear brother, ask and demand of your book, the Testament of Jesus Christ, in these woful and wretched days, what you should think, and what you should stay upon for a certain truth; and whatsoever you hear taught, try it by your book, whether it be true or false. The days are dangerous, and full of peril, not only for the world and worldly things, but for heaven and heavenly things. It is a trouble to lose the treasure of this life, but yet a very pain, if it be kept with the offence of God.

Cry, call, pray, and in Christ daily require help, succour, mercy, wisdom, grace, and defence, that the wickedness of this world prevail not against us. We began well, God preserve us until the end. I would write more often unto you, but I perceive you to be at so much charges with me, that I fear you should think that when I write, I crave. Send me nothing till I send to you for it; and so tell the good men your partners: and when I need, I will be bold with you. December 3, 1554.

Yours with my prayer,
JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER XVI.

*From Bullinger to the most reverend father, master John Hooper, bishop of Worcester and Gloucester, and now prisoner for the gospel of Jesus Christ, my fellow elder and most dear brother in England.**

THE heavenly Father grant unto you, and to all those who are in bands and captivity for his name sake, grace

* Unto these letters of master Hooper, we thought not inconvenient, to annex another epistle, written to him by a famous learned man, Henry Bullinger, chief superintendent in the city of Zurich.

and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord, with wisdom, patience, and fortitude of the Holy Ghost.

I have received from you two letters, my most dear brother: the former in the month of September of the year past; the latter in the month of May of this present year, both written out of prison. But I, doubting lest I should make answer to you in vain, whilst I feared that my letters should never come unto your hands, or else increase and double your sorrow, refrained from the duty of writing. For which I doubt not but you will excuse me, especially seeing you did not vouchsafe, no, not once in a whole year, to answer to my whole libels* rather than letters, whereas I continued still, notwithstanding, writing unto you; as also at this present, after I heard that you were cast in prison, I did not refrain from continual prayer, beseeching our heavenly Father, through our only Mediator Jesus Christ, to grant unto you, and to your fellow-prisoners, faith and constancy unto the end. Now is that happened unto you, my brother, which we did oftentimes prophesy unto ourselves at your being with us, should come to pass, especially when we talked of the power of antichrist, and of his felicity and victories. For you know the saying of Daniel, His power shall be mighty, but not in his strength, and he shall wonderfully destroy and make havoc of all things, and shall prosper and practise, and he shall destroy the mighty and the holy people after his own will. You know what the Lord warned us of beforehand by Matthew, in the tenth chapter, by John in the fifteenth chapter, and the sixteenth, and also what that chosen vessel St. Paul hath written in the second to Timothy, and the third chapter. Wherefore I do not doubt, by God's grace, of your faith and patience, whilst you know that those things which you suffer are not unlooked for or come by chance, but that you suffer them in the best, truest, and most holy quarrel. For what can be more true and holy than our doctrine, which the papists, those worshippers of antichrist, do persecute? All things touching salvation we attribute unto Christ alone, and to his holy institutions, as we have been taught of him and of his disciples. But they would have even the same things to be communicated as

Of whose singular love and tender affection toward master Hooper, you heard before in the beginning of master Hooper's life. Now how lovingly he wrote unto him, you shall hear by this letter.—*Fox.*

* Small books.

well to their antichrist, and to his institutions. Such we ought no less to withstand than we read that Elias withstood the priests of Baal. For if Jesus be Christ, then let them know that he is the fulness of his church, and that perfectly; but if antichrist be king and priest, then let them exhibit unto him that honour. How long do they halt on both sides? Can they give unto us any one that is better than Christ? or who shall be equal with Christ, that may be compared with him, except it be he whom the apostle calleth the adversary? But if Christ be sufficient for his church, what needs this patching and piecing? But I know well enough I need not to use these disputations with you who are sincerely taught, and have taken root in Christ, being persuaded that you have all things in him, and that we in him are made perfect.

Go forwards therefore constantly to confess Christ, and to defy antichrist, being mindful of this most holy and most true saying of our Lord Jesus Christ; "He that overcometh, shall possess all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son: but the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and the murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev. xxi.) The first death is soon overcome, although a man must burn for the Lord's sake: for they say well that do affirm this our fire to be scarcely a shadow of that which is prepared for the unbelievers, and them that fall from the truth. Moreover, the Lord grants unto us, that we may easily overcome by his power the first death, which he himself did taste and overcome, promising such joys as never shall have an end, unspeakable, and passing all understanding, which we shall possess so soon as ever we depart hence. For so again saith the angel of the Lord, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or on his hand, the same shall drink of the wrath of God, yea, of the wine which is poured into the cup of his wrath, and he shall be tormented in fire and brimstone before the holy angels, and before the Lamb: and the smoke of their torments shall ascend evermore, and they shall have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the print of his name. Here is the patience of saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith

of Jesus." To this he adds soon after: "I heard a voice saying unto me, Write: blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, (or speedily they are blessed, John v.) even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, but their works follow them:" for our labour shall not be frustrate or in vain.

Therefore, seeing you have such a large promise, be strong in the Lord, fight a good fight, be faithful to the Lord unto the end. Consider that Christ, the Son of God, is your Captain, and fighteth for you, and that all the prophets, apostles, and martyrs are your fellow-soldiers. They that persecute and trouble us are men, sinful and mortal, whose favour a wise man would not buy with the value of a farthing; and besides that, our life is frail, short, and transitory. Happy are we if we depart in the Lord, who grant unto you, and to all your fellow-prisoners, faith and constancy. Commend me to the most reverend fathers and holy confessors of Christ, doctor Cranmer, bishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ridley, bishop of London, and the good old father, Dr. Latimer. Salute them and all the rest of the prisoners with you for the Lord's cause, in my name, and in the name of all my fellow-ministers, who speak unto you the grace of God, and constancy in the truth.

Concerning the state of our church, it remains even as it was when you departed from us into your country. God grant we may be thankful to him, and that we do not only profess the faith with words, but also express the same effectually with good works, to the praise of our Lord. The word of God increases daily in that part of Italy that is near unto us, and in France.

In the mean while the godly sustain grievous persecutions, and with great constancy and glory; through torments they go unto the Lord. I and all my household, with my sons-in-law and kinsmen, are in good health in the Lord. They all salute you, and pray for your constancy, being sorrowful for you and the rest of the prisoners.

There came to us Englishmen, students both godly and learned: they are received by our magistrate. Ten of them dwell together, the rest remain here and there with good men. Amongst others, master Thomas Lever is dear unto me, and familiar. If there be any thing wherein I may do any pleasure to your wife and children, they shall have me wholly at command: whereof I will write also

to your wife, for I understand she abides at Frankfort. Be strong and joyful in Christ, waiting for his deliverance, when, and in what sort, it shall seem good unto him.

The Lord Jesus show pity upon the realm of England, and illuminate the same with his Holy Spirit, to the glory of his name, and the salvation of souls. The Lord Jesus preserve and deliver you from all evil, with all them that call upon his name. Farewell, and farewell eternally. The 10th of October, 1554. From Zurich.

You know the hand,

H. B.

LETTER XVII.

To Bullinger, written out of prison.

Grace and peace from the Lord. Beloved father, on the 11th of December, I received your letters dated at Zurich the 10th of October. They were most pleasant to me, because they were full of consolation; I readily perceive in them your ancient love and affection towards me; I feel most thankful that you do not forget me in these most difficult times. I always loved you, especially on account of the many virtues, and the excellent gifts of God manifest in you.

You say that you have not received any letters from me during the past year; it is not that I have not written, but that I intrusted my letters to persons who have not been careful to deliver them. Nor have I received all that you sent to me, they have either been lost or intercepted by evil-disposed persons. The same has happened to the letters and book of Theodorus; for I did not hear of his book respecting our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, which he sent me, till some days after the death of our holy king Edward. I then saw it in the library of a pious man on the borders of Wales, whom I had appointed to the deanery of some churches. But what you have now written, I will take care to communicate to all my brethren, my fellow-prisoners.

I congratulate you all for the safety and constancy of your church, and I pray to God, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, that he would evermore fortify and defend it against the tyranny of antichrist. Here, the wound which

he received is quite healed; and he is now accounted for head of the church, who is not even a member of Christ. From others you will learn the state of affairs in this country. We are involved in the greatest dangers, as some years ago: every day the enemies of the gospel are more and more busy. We are imprisoned apart, and treated with ignominy and scorn. We are daily threatened with death, although we have done nothing to deserve it. But in Christ Jesus we are enabled with fortitude to despise the sword and the flames. We know in whom we have believed, and we are assured that we shall lay down our lives in a good cause. Aid us with your prayers, that He who has begun a good work in us may establish it to the end. We are the Lord's—let him do what seemeth good in his eyes.

I entreat you to comfort my wife by your letters, she is a pious and most exemplary woman.* Exhort her to bring up our children carefully—Rachel your god-daughter, a well-disposed girl, and our son Daniel—and to educate them in true religion, in the knowledge and fear of God. I also send two books, which I wish you to read, consider, and correct if they contain any thing which is not agreeable to the word of God. The first is, "Concerning the true doctrine and use of the Lord's Supper," which I have dedicated to the parliament of England, that we may publicly reply to our adversaries. The other is, "For discerning and avoiding false religion." I entreat you to cause them to be printed as soon as possible. Both are approved by the learned and pious in this country. I have also written many other letters to the bishops, that they should bring forward the books in parliament, and I wish them also to be printed, that all may understand how unfairly and unjustly we are dealt with. But I need not write to you at length concerning this; you will understand my wishes from the letters and books themselves, and if your Froscover is unable to print them, be pleased to send them to Basle to Operinus, who prints well and correctly. I know he will comply, if the books are sent to him with your recommendation. I earnestly entreat you to do this. Do not be fearful for me, lest the enemies of the gospel should rage more severely, and with greater cruelty, on account of the publishing these books; I have a most faithful Keeper and

* Hooper had sent his wife to the continent; she was at that time at Frankfort, and corresponded with Bullinger.—*Burnet.*

Defender in our heavenly Father for Christ's sake, to whom I have wholly committed myself. To his faith and care I commend myself; if my days are prolonged, may he cause it to be for the glory of his name; but if he wills that my short and evil life be ended, I can also say, "His will be done." I write secretly, and therefore my letters are shorter and less correct than yours, but consider them favourably I entreat you.

Written in haste from prison, December the 11th, 1554. I salute your wife and all your family both abroad and at home, also all others whom I know.

Yours most affectionately as I ought to be,

JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER XVIII.

To my dear friends in God, master John Hall and his wife.

THE grace of God be with you. Amen. I thank you for your loving and gentle friendship at all times, praying to God to show unto you such favour, that whatsoever trouble and adversity happen, you go not back from him. These days are dangerous and full of peril, but yet, let us comfort ourselves in calling to remembrance the days of our forefathers; upon whom the Lord sent such troubles, that many hundreds, yea, many thousands, died for the testimony of Jesus Christ, both men and women, suffering with patience and constancy as much cruelty as tyrants could devise, and so departed out of this miserable world to everlasting bliss, where now they remain for ever, looking always for the end of this sinful world, when they shall receive their bodies again in immortality, and see the number of the elect associated with them in full and consummate joys. Suffering martyrdom as virtuous men, and tarrying a little while in this world with pains, by and by they rested in everlasting joys; and as their pains ended their sorrows and began ease, so did their constancy and steadfastness animate and confirm all good people in the truth, and gave them encouragement and desire to suffer the like, rather than to fall with the world to consent unto wickedness and idolatry.

Wherefore, my dear friends, seeing God of his part has illuminated you with the same gift and knowledge of true faith, wherein the apostles, the evangelists, and all martyrs

suffered most cruel death, thank him for his grace in knowledge, and pray unto him for strength and perseverance, that through your own fault you may not be ashamed nor afraid to confess it. You are in the truth, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it, nor antichrist with all his imps prove it to be false. They may kill and persecute, but never overcome. Be of good comfort, and fear God more than man. This life is short and miserable; happy are they that can spend it to the glory of God. Pray for me as I do for you, and commend me to all good men and women. December 22, anno 1554.

Your brother in Christ,

JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER XIX.

*In answer to a letter whereby he was informed of a godly company, to the number of thirty, taken at prayer in a house in Bow Church yard, and carried to prison.**

THE grace of God be with you, Amen. I perceived by your letter how that upon new year's day at night, there were taken a godly company of christians while they were praying. I do rejoice that men can be so well occupied in this perilous time, and flee unto God for remedy by prayer, as well for their own wants and necessities, as also charitably to pray for them that persecute them. So doth the word of God command all men to pray charitably for those that hate them, and not to revile any magistrate with words, or to mean him evil with force and violence. They also may rejoice that in well doing they were taken to the prison, wherefore I have thought it good to send them this little writing of consolation; praying God to send them patience, charity, and constancy in the truth of his most holy word. Thus fare you well, and pray to God to send his true word unto this realm again amongst us, which the ungodly bishops have now banished. 4th January, 1554—5.

* On new-year's day, in Bow church-yard, at night, was an assembly of men and women, to the number of thirty and above, who had the English service and prayers used, and a lecture among them, Thomas Rosse (or Rose) being their minister. They were taken by the sheriffs, and their minister, after he had been brought before the chancellor, was sent to the Tower, and the rest to the Counter and other places.—*Strype.*

LETTER XX.

To the godly and faithful company of prisoners in both the counters, who were taken together at prayer in a house in Bow church-yard.

The grace, favour, consolation, and aid of the Holy Ghost be with you now and ever; so be it.

Dearly beloved in the Lord, ever since your imprisonment, I have been marvellously moved with great affections and passions, as well of joy and gladness, as of heaviness and sorrow. Of gladness, that I perceive how you are bent and given to prayer and invocation of God's help, in these dark and wicked proceedings of men against God's glory. I have been sorry, to perceive the malice and wickedness of men to be so cruel, devilish, and tyrannical, to persecute the people of God for serving of God, for saying and hearing of the holy psalms and the word of eternal life. These cruel doings declare, that the papists' church is more bloody and tyrannical than the sword of the heathens and gentiles ever was.

When I heard of your taking, and what you were doing, wherefore, and by whom you were taken, I remembered how the christians in the primitive church were used by the cruelty of unchristened heathens in the time of Trajan the emperor, about seventy-seven years after Christ's ascension into heaven. The christians were persecuted very sorely, as though they had been traitors and movers of sedition. Whereupon the gentile emperor Trajan required to know the true cause of christian men's troubles. A great learned man, called Pliny the younger, wrote unto him, and said, it was because the christians said certain psalms before day unto one called Christ, whom they worshipped for God. When Trajan the emperor understood it was for nothing but for conscience and religion, he caused by his commandments every where, that no man should be persecuted for serving of God.* Lo! a gentile and heathen man would not have such as were of a contrary religion punished for serving of God!

But the pope and his church have cast you into prison, being taken even in doing the work of God, and one of

* Trajan did not disapprove Pliny's putting the Christians to death if brought before him and they refused to renounce their faith; but he ordered that they should NOT be sought after. In this respect, "the papists were more bloody and tyrannical."

the most excellent works that is required of christian men ; that is, whilst you were in prayer, and not in such wicked and superstitious prayer as the papists use, but in the same prayer that Christ has taught you to pray ; and in his name only you gave God thanks for that you have received, and for his sake you ask for such things as you want. O glad may you be that ever you were born to be apprehended whilst you were so virtuously occupied. Blessed be they that suffer for righteousness' sake. For if God had suffered them that took your bodies, then to have taken your life also, now had you been following the Lamb in perpetual joys, away from the company and assembly of wicked men. But the Lord would not have you so to depart suddenly, but reserves you gloriously to speak and maintain his truth to the world.

Be not careful what you shall say, for God will go out and in with you, and will be present in your hearts and in your mouths to speak his wisdom, although it seem foolishness to the world. He that hath begun this good work in you, confirm, strengthen, and continue you in the same unto the end ; and pray unto him, that you may fear Him only, that hath power to kill both body and soul, and to cast them into hell fire. Be of good comfort : all the hairs of your heads are numbered, and there is not one of them can perish, except your heavenly Father suffer it to perish. Now you are even in the field, and placed in the fore front of Christ's battle. Doubtless it is a singular favour of God, and a special love of him towards you, to give you this foreward and preeminence, and a sign that he trusts you before others of his people.

Wherefore, dear brethren and sisters, continually fight this fight of the Lord. Your cause is most just and godly; you stand for the true Christ, who is after the flesh in heaven, and for his true religion and honour, which is amply, fully, sufficiently, and abundantly contained in the holy Testament sealed with Christ's own blood.

How much are you bound to God, to put you in trust with so holy and just a cause ! Remember what lookers on you have, to see and behold you in your fight, even God and all his holy angels, who are ready always to take you up into heaven, if you are slain in this fight. Also you have standing at your backs all the multitude of the faithful, who shall take courage, strength, and desire to follow such noble and valiant christians as you are.

Be not afraid of your adversaries, for He that is in you is stronger than he that is in them. Shrink not although it be pain to you. Your pains are not now so great, as your joys shall be hereafter.

Read the comfortable chapters to the Romans, viii. x. xv. Hebrews xi. xii. And upon your knees thank God that ever you were accounted worthy to suffer any thing for his name sake. Read the second chapter of St. Luke's gospel, and there you shall see how the shepherds that watched their sheep all night, as soon as they heard that Christ was born at Bethlehem, presently went to see him. They did not reason nor debate with themselves who should keep the wolf from the sheep in the mean time, but did as they were commanded, and committed their sheep unto Him whose pleasure they obeyed. So let us do now, when we are called, and commit all other things unto Him that calleth us. He will take heed that all things shall be well; he will help the husband, he will comfort the wife, he will guide the servants, he will keep the house, he will preserve the goods; yea, rather than it should be undone, he will wash the dishes, and rock the cradle. Cast all your care upon God, for he careth for you.

Besides this, you may perceive by your imprisonment, that your adversaries' weapons against you are nothing but flesh, blood, and tyranny. For, if they were able, they would maintain their wicked religion by God's word; but for lack of that, they would violently compel such as they cannot persuade by the holy scriptures, because the holy word of God and all Christ's doings are quite contrary unto them. I pray you, pray for me, and I will pray for you. And although we are asunder after the world, yet we are in Christ, I trust, for ever, joying in the spirit, and so shall meet in the palace of heavenly joys after this short and transitory life is ended. God's peace be with you, Amen. Fourth of January, 1555.

JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER XXI.

A letter written to certain of his friends, exhorting them to cleave constantly to the professed truth of the gospel in those days of trial, and not to shrink for any trouble.

THE grace of God be with you. Amen. I wrote unto you of late, and told you what severity the parliament

had concluded upon concerning religion, suppressing the truth, and setting forth the untruth; intending to cause all men by extremity to forswear themselves, and to take again, for the head of the church, him that is neither head nor member of it, but a very enemy, as the word of God and all ancient writers do record. And for lack of law and authority, they will use force and extremity, which have been the arguments to defend the pope and popery since his authority first began in the world. But now is the time of trial, to see whether we most fear God or man. It was an easy thing to hold with Christ whilst the prince and the world held with him; but now the world hates him, it is the true trial who are his.

Wherefore in the name, and in the virtue, strength, and power of his Holy Spirit, prepare yourselves in any case to adversity and constancy. Let us not run away when it is most time to fight; remember, none shall be crowned but such as fight manfully; and he that endures to the end shall be saved. You must now turn all your cogitations from the perils you see, and mark the felicity that follows the peril; either victory in this world over your enemies, or else a surrender of this life to inherit the everlasting kingdom. Beware of beholding too much the felicity or misery of this world; for the consideration and earnest love or fear of either of them draws us from God.

Wherefore think with yourselves as touching the felicity of the world, it is good; but yet no otherwise than it stands with the favour of God. It is to be kept; but so far that by keeping of it we lose not God. It is good to abide and tarry still among our friends here: but yet so that we tarry not therewith in God's displeasure, and hereafter dwell with devils in everlasting fire. There is nothing under God but may be kept, so that God, being above all things we have, be not lost.

Of adversity judge the same. Imprisonment is painful, but yet liberty upon evil conditions is more painful. The prisons stink;* but yet not so much as sweet houses where the fear and true honour of God is wanting. I must be alone and solitary. It were better so to be and to have God with me, than to be in company with the wicked. Loss of goods is great; but loss of God's grace and favour is greater. I am a poor simple creature, and

* The prisons at that time were very noisome. See Hooper's account of his treatment in the Fleet prison, page 4.

cannot tell how to answer before such a great sort of noble, learned, and wise men; but it is better to make answer before the pomp and pride of wicked men, than to stand naked in the sight of all heaven and earth before the just God at the latter day.* I shall die then by the hands of the cruel man—he is blessed that loses this life full of mortal miseries, and finds the life full of eternal joys. It is pain and grief to depart from goods and friends; but yet not so much as to depart from grace and heaven itself. Wherefore there is neither felicity nor adversity of this world, that can appear to be great, if it be weighed with the joys or pains of the world to come.

I can do no more but pray for you; do the same for me, for God's sake. For my part, I thank the heavenly Father, I have made my accounts, and appointed myself unto the will of my heavenly Father; as he will, so will I, by his grace. For God's sake, as soon as you can, send my poor wife and children some letter from you, and my letter also which I have sent of late to Downton. As it was told me, she never had a letter from me since the coming of master S. unto her; the more are the messengers to blame, for I have written divers times. The Lord comfort them, and provide for them; for I am able to do nothing in worldly things. She is a godly and wise woman. If my meaning has been accomplished, she should have had necessary things; but what I mean God can perform, to whom I commend both her and you all. I am a precious jewel now, and daintily kept, never so daintily! for neither my own man, nor any of the servants of the house, may come to me, but my keeper alone: a simple rude man, God knows, but I am nothing careful thereof. Fare you well. The 21st of January, 1554—5.

Yours bounden, JOHN HOOPER.

LETTER XXII.

A letter concerning the vain and false reports which were spread abroad of him, that he had recanted and abjured that doctrine which he before had preached.

THE grace and peace of God be with all them that unfeignedly look for the coming of our Saviour Christ. Amen.

* Bishop Hooper was examined before Gardiner and other Romanists the next day, and condemned a few days afterwards.

Dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, and my fellow-prisoners for the cause of God's gospel; I do rejoice and give thanks unto God for your constancy and perseverance in affliction, wishing and praying unto him for your continuance therein to the end. And as I do rejoice in your faith, and constancy in afflictions, that are in prison, even so do I mourn and lament to hear of our dear brethren abroad, that yet have not suffered nor felt such dangers for God's truth, as we have, and do feel, and are daily like to suffer more, yea, the very extreme death of the fire! Yet such is the report abroad, as I am credibly informed, that I, John Hooper, a condemned man for the cause of Christ, now, after sentence of death, being in Newgate prisoner, looking daily for execution, should recant and abjure that which heretofore I have preached. And this talk arises of this, that the bishop of London and his chaplains resort unto me. Doubtless, if our brethren were as godly as I could wish them to be, they would think, that in case I refused to talk with them, they might have just occasion to say that I were unlearned, and durst not speak with learned men, or else proud, and disdained to speak with them. Therefore, to avoid just suspicion of both, I have, and do daily speak with them when they come, not doubting but that they reported that I am neither proud, nor unlearned. And I would wish all men to do as I do in this point. For I fear not their arguments, neither is death terrible unto me. Wherefore I pray you to make true report of the same, as occasion shall serve; and that I am more confirmed in the truth I have preached heretofore by their communications.

Ye that may, send to the weak brethren abroad, praying that they trouble me not with such reports of recantations as they do. For I have hitherto left all things of this world, and suffered great pains and long imprisonment, and I thank God I am ready even as gladly to suffer death for the truth I have preached as a mortal man may be. Oh Lord, how slippery the love of man, yea man himself is! It were better for them to pray for us, rather than to credit or raise such rumours that are untrue, unless they were more certain thereof than ever they shall be able to prove. We have enemies enough among such as know not God. Truly this false report of weak brethren is a double trouble and a triple cross. I do wish you eternal salvation in Jesus Christ, and also require your continual prayers, that He which hath begun in us may save us to the end.

I have taught this truth with my tongue, and with my pen heretofore, and hereafter shortly will confirm the same, by God's grace, with my blood. Pray for me, gentle brethren, and have no mistrust. Forth of Newgate the 2d of February, anno 1554—5.

Your brother JOHN HOOPER.*

LETTER XXIII.

Extract of a letter from Hooper to Bullinger, giving an account of his conversion.†

BELOVED brother in Christ; not many years since, when I lived at court, and my life too much resembled that of a courtier, I happily met with some writings of the excellent and pious Zuingle, and the commentary upon the epistles of Paul which you published for the general benefit, and which will prove a lasting memorial of your name.

I was unwilling to neglect these excellent gifts of God, thus set forth by you to the world at large, especially as I perceived that they seriously affected the salvation of my soul and my everlasting welfare. Therefore I considered the work to be so valuable, that with earnest study and an almost superstitious diligence, I employed myself therein both night and day. Nor was I ever weary of that labour. For after I was grown up, and, by the kindness of my father, my wants were liberally supplied, I had blasphemed God by a wicked worship and a sort of idolatrous service, following the evil ways of my forefathers until I became rightly acquainted with the Lord. Being at length set free by the kindness of God, for which I am indebted to him, and to you as the means, nothing now remains so far as the remainder of my life and my last end are concerned, but that I should worship the Lord with a pure heart.

* He was taken from Newgate on the 5th of February, and burned at Gloucester on the 9th.

† Translated from the original quoted Hottinger, *Hist. Eccles.* sec. 16, pars ii. p. 271. It is without date.

THE END.

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